KULA DEVATHA OR TUTELARY/FAMILY DEITIES: ORIGIN AND CONCEPT

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Born in the year 1945 in Tamilnadu, and basically a Printing Technologist, I served in various Central Govt organizations such as Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under the then Ministry of Scientific affairs, Govt of India; Bank Note Press, Ministry of Finance, Dept of Economic Affairs, Govt of India, Dewas, engaged in the printing of Bank Notes and Currencies, before finally superannuated in the capacity of a senior official in the year 2005. After retirement I worked in the capacity of a Consultant in Security Printing; obtained a Patent on new technique for numbering of currencies and participated in an international conference in Hongkong as a special invitee to present a paper on counterfeiting menace.

Under the Pen name 'SANTHIPRIYA', I am pursuing the art of writing; have written over 1500 spiritual articles in English and Tamil covering several Temples, Mahans and other historical stories connected to spiritual world and published them in my own website https://pages.santhipriya.com/.

Have translated over 2500 pages of english articles into Tamil for various websites. Few of the voluminous books written by me have been published by few of the groups engaged in spreading spiritual knowledge and few more are likely to be published soon. To help the students in printing, I have published many articles and Question and Answers in my website https://printing.santhipriya.com/.

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1. **Kula Devatha** or Tutelary/Family deity refers to male or female, God/Goddess, Sub or Demi god or Goddess, whom a family worshipped traditionally through generations. As per Vedic agamic rules, Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity is the first and foremost God to be offered worship in one's home not only in general but especially during the festive functions, rituals and other important ceremonies conducted/performed at home. This practice has been followed over generations by most of the families to whom their Kula Devatha was known.
2. **The worship** of Kula devatha was carried forward only by the male members of the family through generations ; their Kula Devatha never changes; however, the Kula Devatha gets changed immediately for the female members, once they get married, since she becomes the property of her husband who may belong to

different other Gothra. As per the vedic norms, which is in practice over several centuries, the married women lose the Gothra of her parental side and had to adapt the newer one belonging to her husband's family. It is believed that Kula Devatha, guide and guard the family members from all hardships and hindrances faced due to karmic deeds; the Kula Devatha believe to protect the family and the succeeding lineage / generations from all odds. Therefore, worship of Kula Devatha should not be ignored as it helps the family lineage grow and take stronger roots. The belief further goes that when we visit the Kula devatha temple, the souls of our forefathers feel happy and bless us with good, prosperous and healthy life.

3. Over long period of time, I attempted to understand the concept of Tutelary/Family-deities, locally called Kulatheivam or Kula Devatha, and literally attempted to analyze the concept of Kula devatha worship by speaking to several people, priests and common folks spread across the urban and rural areas where the practice and worship of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity is in practice.

4. After my retirement I extensively travelled in rural areas and visited several temples, where I spoke to many folks and priests to understand the concept or the origin of the practice. Wherever and whenever I attended religious functions, there too I talked to the purohitas (chaplain or family priest) and pundits to understand the concept out of curiosity. There was specific reason for my curiosity as half in my life (Parental family), we were worshiping wrong deity as Kula Devatha and came to know of the deity worshipped by our

ancestors much later, by mere accident, perhaps when we were destined to know it. Realizing our grave mistake, thereafter we too began to worship the same Kula devatha as worshipped by our ancestors.

5. I also met few learned pundits, especially those in the temples, astrologers, elderly personnel and others who practiced the divinatory art of predicting future using cowries & other materials to cull out some information on this issue, since they were generally approached by the folks whose Kula Devatha was unknown to them. The views I received from them were divergent in nature. I received several interesting queries from several readers across the globe on my earlier small articles posted in my Website (https://pages.santhipriya.com/) in Tamil on Kula Devatha. I attempted clarify many of the unanswered queries to some extent which must have satisfied the readers, but at the same time, I did not leave my pursuit and continued my search to get some more answers to satisfy me.

6. I was excited when two to three unknown elderly people spoke to me on telephone, complemented me for the information that I had provided on Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity and discussed certain other issues on the worship pattern and requested for further clarifications. They suggested that I publish the article in English for wider coverage to enable the younger generation too understand the fading ethos of worship of Kula Devatha unknown to them till then. There were numerous other callers too who complimented me on my articles on Kula Devatha.

7. **I would** like to briefly quote only two interesting interactions, which I had with two personalities-one a male and the other female member- during my research process. One gentleman from Tirunelveli district in the state of Tamilnadu, a convert to another religious sect, contacted me and after introducing himself, spoke to me at length on how his ancestors got converted into another religion, thereby resulting in him not able to know who his family deity whom his ancestors worshipped ! As he was mentally disturbed due to several family feuds and personal set backs, when he consulted some astrologers, they studied his horoscope and gave divergent views, but all were firm in one point-problem in his life was curse on account of non worship of his Kula devatha. Upon reading one of my articles on Kula Devatha, he said, he contacted me seeking certain clarity and advice on how to recommence the worship of his Kula Devatha and how to find out who his unknown Kula Devatha was.

8. **Earlier** some of his friends advised him to reach out to predictive astrologers or other or soothsayers to find out who his Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity was; some others suggested exploring other means like approaching those who spoke through mediums- spirits; but he ignored all their suggestion and contacted me to seek my opinion.

9. **From my** experience I have found out that even experienced Astrologers, soothsayers, those who predict one's future and problems after speaking with the spirits of their ancestors and Nadi astrology (predicting with the finger print of left hand thumb impression) can not exactly predict the name of the Kula

Devatha and accurate place where one's Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity resided; they can only broadly guide one, but can not pin pointedly tell either the name of the deity or the name of the temple where the deity -Kula Devatha- resided; but, the astrologers may not agree with me. I am of the strong opinion that even the well experienced astrologer can only predict the Kula Devatha to be either male or female deity and further reveal whether the female deity was Amman or Mariamman or Grama devatha provided they were expert in prediction; on the other hand, only elders in the lineage can throw light on the actual deity whom their ancestors worshipped as Kula Devatha.

10. With these convictions and some personal experience and knowledge in this matter, I discouraged the unknown stranger friend from undertaking any such multi varied exercises and instead first try to trace out his Kula Devata (family deity) by asking elders in his family, especially those on his father's or mother's side, as they may know which deity their family worshipped. Also, look for temples in his ancestral village or places where family rituals like Mundan (hair shaving ceremony) or post-wedding ceremonies were held. He took my advice in the right spirit and began searching for the relatives of his forefathers to find out their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity.

11. Few days later he contacted me again by phone to thank me and informed me that he managed to get some information from one of the relatives from his forefather's lineage to learn the name of the deity whom their forefathers worshipped. He was pleasantly surprised when he was told that the shrine of the deity

whom his ancestors had worshipped lay just outside the compound wall of the same religious centre of their converted religion.

12. He was still amazed that he had walked past the shrine many times, which was very small roadside shrine, touching the boundary wall of their new (converted) religious centre. His relative showed him the small structure inside which was seated a Mariamman group of deity (I have forgotten the name mentioned by him), who was worshipped by their ancestors and discontinued the worship after they got converted into the new religion for various social reasons which prevailed in those days.

13. His family deity was found seated inside the small dilapidated brick structure touching the wall of the converted religious centre. Once he got the full facts, he began to offer worship to the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity seated inside the brick structure in addition to offering worship in the converted religion which he could not abandon due to social reasons.

14. The gentleman confessed that after he began worshiping his Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, he felt as if his mental agony began to recede and several of his family disputes which mentally bothered him started disappearing slowly. He sought some more clarification on Kula Devatha and again profusely thanked me for my advice. After few more days he contacted me again to tell that following his decision few more family members of him too began to offer worship to their original family deity- Mariamman . When he sought my advice as to how he can render some service to the shrine of his Kula Devatha, I suggested that as token of his obeisance and prayer, he could start meeting the expenditure of oil

used for lighting up the oil lamp kept inside the shrine; without hesitation he happily agreed to do it.

15. The second close interaction was with an unknown lady from Bangalore who contacted me sometime in Feb 2019 by Email followed by telephonic call. After exchanging pleasantries, she spoke to me at length on the ordeals faced by her as if I was closely associated with her for many years. She said that contacted me after reading my article on Kula Devatha. She mentioned that she could not offer worship to her unknown grama Devatha called Tanjamma along with her Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity Ayyanaar since her husband was disinterested in finding the temple where her grama devatha - Goddess Tanjamma- was enshrined and sought my help to find out where the temple of Goddess Tanjamma existed around Kanchipuram near Chennai in Tamilnadu. As per the practice of her family they had to offer worship to both male deity Ayyanaar who was their primary Kula Devatha and female grama devatha Tanjamma who was their secondary Kula Devatha. Though she gave me few hints on the deity worshipped by her ancestors, she could not tell the exact place where some of her ancestors lived in and around Kanchipuram near Chennai in Tamilnadu. Her attempt to find where Tanjamma temple existed around Kanchipuram failed ; hence she approach me seeking help.

16. Since I was nether a detective, nor an astrologer to find out the lost articles, I advised her to read my article on how to find out the Kua Devatha as practiced for many years by our elders provided she believed in it. I wrote the article in my Website Santhipriya.com in 2018 (https://santhipriya.com/2018/04/ritual-to-find-

out-the-tutelary-deity.html). I told her that this practice has been followed by our ancestors for many years in the past. She promised to begin practicing it from next day.

17. She was eager to find out her Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity temple since some astrologers had indicated to her that discontinuing the grama devatha deity worship was the main reason for her current predicaments. She was suffering from terminal cancer and wanted to offer worship Goddess Tanjamma before anything could happen to her. With the inputs I received from her, I started searching for Tanjamma temples extensively and could come up only with two or three places as the possible location of the temple. Still, the information was insufficient to locate the exact location of the temple where her grama Devatha resided from among those two to three Tanjamma temples which too were in Andhra Pradesh. I failed to locate the site of Tanjamma in or around Kancheepuram.

18. Days passed and one day she suddenly rang me up to inform me that she did perform the ritual as suggested by me and got clue of her Kula Devatha by luck. One of the Car repair works in Jayanagar showed signboard as Tanjamma repair works. Out of curiosity when she interacted with the owner of the Car repair shop, she got clue on her grama devatha's temple. Based on the clues from them, and the name and places of three Tanjamma temples which I had mentioned to her, I published her story under the title 'In search of Kula devatha- a true story- in my website in the month of March, 2019 withholding her name and whereabouts

under the title 'In search of Kulatheivam Family deity - a true story'.

19. Strangely after the story appeared in my website, there were few more callers seeking information on the very same Goddess Tanjamma who was their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity and the temples where the deity had been installed. They approached me because the details on those temples were not available in any of the web sites.

20. My interaction with some of the Tanjamma devotees revealed that the same deity in the same name was worshipped by different sects in two to three different other temples in faraway places. Each group or sects offered worship to the same deity in the same name, but only in the specific temples where their ancestors had offered worship. But I could not get the addresses of the temple as they were not separate shrines of Goddess Tanjamma. She was seated in different other temples in separate sanctums.

21. However, with clues provided by one of them which I passed on the information to the lady. Later she said she succeeded in locating the place of her Grama Devatha (her secondary Kula Devatha) which was in a remote place in a village called Adukkamporai, in Vellore near Kanchipuram in Tamilnadu. She said along with Tanjamma, a Grahma devatha called Selliamma was also there in the shrine. The lady profusely thanked me for my effort. Thereafter for many days I did not contact her; however, after few months when I called her to find out the address and photo of the deity, I was informed by her husband that she had already passed away few weeks earlier. I felt sad. Therefore, in the year 2020 I

removed her story published in my website in March, 2019 (Link https://santhipriya.com/2019/03/tanjamma-kuladevathai.html) to conceal the identity of the late soul.

22. I was thrilled to face many such interactions through mail, telephonic talk etc including calls from foreign countries who wanted some advice on their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities.

23. Since I continued to receive queries from many callers on how to find out the unknown Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, based on the centuries old custom and practice which was not widely known to the folks, I published the english translation of my Tamil article on how to find out the unknown Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, published in the year 2018 (Original link : https://santhipriya.com/2018/04/குல-தெய்வத்தை-எப்படி-அடை.html) . The English version appeared in my website in the year 2020 (Link: https://santhipriya.com/2020/10/family-deity-kulatheivam-how-to-find-out.html).

24. From the inputs I received, I came to know that some of the folks were benefited by my article and were able to find out their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity by the practice published in my website and thanked me for the article.

25. The unique experience compelled me to search for more material for this researched article. I began collecting information on:

• How were the divines created?

• How did the concept of worship of the divines and worship of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity emerge?

• How were the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity adapted by families?
• Does specific ritual exist through which one can adapt newer Tutelary/Family deity or Kula Devatha?
• How could there be so many Tutelary/Family deity or Kula Devathas?
• The newer family deities when emerge as Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, from where do they derive divine powers?
• Can one change their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity at will?

26. To those who contacted me, I promised to write a detailed article on the origin of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity covering all their queries to the best of my knowledge. As I mentioned in previous paras the inputs in my article were based on the discussions I had with various temple pundits, some persons of deeper spiritual mind, read in several sources, word of mouth stories which flowed through generations, heard in discourses, folk lores, discussions with few individual elders at various periods of time and other materials in web.

27. Lot of theories and debates float around the origin of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity. If one read several texts of Puranas and epics they can find the reference of divine worship during the Vedic period which led to the worship of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity.

28. As per the folk lore of Nalgheda temple in Sharjapur district in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, on the advice of Lord Krishna, Yudhishthira, one of the Pandava brothers came to Bagalakmukhi Devi temple in Nalgheda

and offered prayers to the Devi for victory in the Mahabharata war. Lord krishna reportedly told Pandava brothers that Goddess Bagalakmukhi Devi was their family deity (Read the story of the devi in link: https://santhipriya.com/2012/05/ujjain-bagalamuki-temple.html) which confirms that the worship of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity existed even during the period the Mahabharata war was enacted. Mahabharata war may have occurred sometime between 3500 years or 7000 years. Some of the puranic stories states that Lord Krishna's disappearance from the universe occurred during the same period.

29. Reading the texts of epics, Puranas and other scriptures, it is evident that the concept of divine worship including the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity did exist during the vedic period. For example, there are references to Brahmins in ancient texts such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavatam, Rig Veda and Bhavishya Puranas which have been written during the vedic period of time. One sect in the Brahmins who were predominant in the vedic period were Saraswat Brahmins who resided in the banks of River Saraswathi. Those Saraswat Brahmins are known to belong to Gothra of the seven Rishis first created by Brahma. Traditionally it is said that each Kula or descendants of a family belonged to a distinctive Gothra and each Gothra represented one of the seven Saptha Rishis. The Saraswat Brahmins who perhaps have ten Gothra in the name of ten Maharishis have the long history and conventional practice of worshiping eight specific Kula Devadas, which further indicates that the concept of Kula Devatha worship prevailed even in vedic period. This will clarify how the

Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity concept has been adapted by families. There are several historical stories on Saraswat Brahmins which strengthens the belief that the family deity worship existed in their period of time.

30. The practice of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity worship surfaced beginning from vedic period when there were no castes or religion and everyone alike worshipped the same form of divines. In the greatest epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata too there was no reference on castes and religion like Hindus, non-Hindus, but references of human divide, classifying the society into four varnas or classes - based on their capabilities to perform certain functions existed.

31. What exactly is a deity or divine? It is a supernatural being in some form or appearance, possessed with supernatural divine powers and who is worshipped by people, who believe that it controls or exerts force over all aspects of the world. While in Hinduism, the deity is referred as Devatha, the Europeans coined it as Deity which is a Latin word- Deus, meaning God. 'Deva' in Sanskrit too refers to divine and 'Kula', the sect or generation.

32. The Hindu theistic believe in various paths of worship such as henotheism (belief in single supreme God without disputing existence of other divine forces), monotheism (believe that only one supreme God exist), polytheism (belief in pantheon of divines, both male and female), panentheism (belief that divine exists everywhere in the universe, accessible to everyone), or monism (Only one God which is masculine and eternal) for spiritual enlightenment and to safeguard families for progress in life. The worship of Kula Devatha or

Tutelary/Family deity concept comes under Polytheism and Panentheism. Kula devatha is specific deity for each family.

33. Since many centuries every family/sect/lineage/generation had their own chosen deity of either male of female divine forms. For generations each family tree worshipped a specific deity and thus they became their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity; there was always a bond between the family and the specific deity and hence it became custom for the family members to always offer prayers to the specific deity in the name of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity immediately after invoking Lord Ganesha, who is the prime divine, the remover of obstacles. Thus, in any rituals or ceremonies performed by the family, prayers to divines in the ritual or ceremony follows only after Lord Ganesha is invoked and immediately offering prayers to Kula Devatha. All other rituals in the ceremonies begin subsequently after invoking Lord Ganesha and Kula Devatha. The head of each family used to be referred as 'Glue of the family' and who hold the family together to maintain strong bonds between family members.

34. There goes belief that any function, ceremonies, rituals or poojas performed will give no fruitful result unless the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity is invoked or worshipped immediately after invoking Lord Ganesha.

35. Most of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity temples are normally found in the family's ancestral village/towns because several hundred years ago most of the folks lived in the villages as a cluster group or settled

together along with their relatives around. Those places used to be called as Agraharams by the Brahmins community.

36. Similarly in each state in India, in many villages there are localities or settlements where certain castes or communities historically settled together, forming distinct neighborhoods that serve similar purposes as Agraharams, focusing on community life and sharing cultural practices. Each families had their own Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity and temples in village level. The specific deity worshipped by them as a Kula Devatha varied depending on the lineage and their traditions.

37. In the Vedic period the father was head of each family and none reversed his dictum nor felt ashamed of toeing their father's line. It was priority to maintain the togetherness of the families, and those family members who disrespected or revolted against the unity of the family were either discarded or condemned by other family members. In the past, everyone in the family-right from grand parents to great grandson- lived under the same roof, or if the members were more and could not live in a smaller house, some of the family members along with their kids lived in nearby neighbourhood so that on occasions of important events, all of them could join together and celebrate the function as one unified family. What the practice prevailed then was that after the demise of father, either his wife or the first son in that family automatically gained the status of family head.

38. From the great, great grandfather to the youngest great grandson in the lineage, everyone

worshipped specific deity in a specific temple of their village/city which became their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity. On important occasions all of them together went to the temple and worshiped their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity. The practice continued in each of the family clans through the lineage members. This is how the concept of worshiping the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity of the first generation flew down amongst the members of their families.

39. The majority of present-day folks lived in remote villages along with their family members in cluster groups, because most of them were engaged either in the agricultural activities or as labourers or in the profession such as priests or pundits attending to the rituals and functions performed by Kingdoms in various areas.

40. In those era, none of the townships were well developed, hence, the villages consisted of clusters of various castes and creed; however, everyone lived as a group in their region and together participated in each one of the functions or rituals held in their villages.

41. In the initial era when the settlements in remote villages appeared, each one of the family members began to show respect to some stones erected on the spots where dead pet animals were buried, spots where those died in the families were buried or spots where strange noises were made by different animals or birds. They were believed as wandering areas of unknown souls. Over the years the stones erected on them became unknown divine and offered worship.

42. Years further rolled on, the folks began to erect different shaped stones or stones carved into some images by artisan in their village on those spots as stated

in previous para, which began to be considered as sacred places. Thus, the concept of giving some forms or appearance to the stones when surfaced, those spots subsequently began to be called as deities and offer of worship began. Over several years subsequently, those sacred places became their worship places and the images carved out on the stones or statues installed there became Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity or as their Ishta Devatha for worship.

43. This is how the unknown places and spots in the villages turned into places of worship, where carved out imaged stones or statues made of clay or mud were installed and named as guardian or village deities; later they were housed either in the open space without roof or under roof covered with woven fronds of either coconut trees or palm trees.

44. In the above background, it is safe to assume that the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity concept emerged from the worship of deities whose numerous idols and statues were found erected in the villages and venerated as part of the folk tradition in villages. One cannot find even one village without a statue of some deities addressed in many names, few among them as Aiyanar, Muneswaran, Karuppaswamy, and various forms of Amman (goddesses) like Mariamman, Renuga Devi, Ellamma, and Pachai Amman, Pothuraju, Sastha, Gangamma, Polamma, and Sunkalamma, Shastha, Kathavarayan, sapthakanniga, Maheswaramma, Pidariyamman, Maha Kali etc etc. The list has numerous such names.

45. The names of divines vary between south and north India where Mariamman is called as Seethalamma . To my

knowledge in northern India, the concept of Kula Devatha does not exist and they offer prayers in the name of Ishta Devatha or Grama Devatha. The specific deities whom the North Indians worship, are often tied to their caste, community, or geographical region. Those deities may not be as formally recognized as Kula Devathas, but perform roles in terms of familial and community identity. However, in North India, some of the sects do worship incarnations of goddess Parvati called by different names, Lord Shiva, Snake gods and Goddess Durga, Kali, Lord Hanuman, Lord Krishna, and various other deities as their Kula Devatha.

46. This is the prime reason why most of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity of one's generation is found in one's ancestral village. It is also interesting to note that out of those deities, over 90 % were Village guardian deities or Grama devathas - which were either second or third line of divines in the hierarchy of divines.

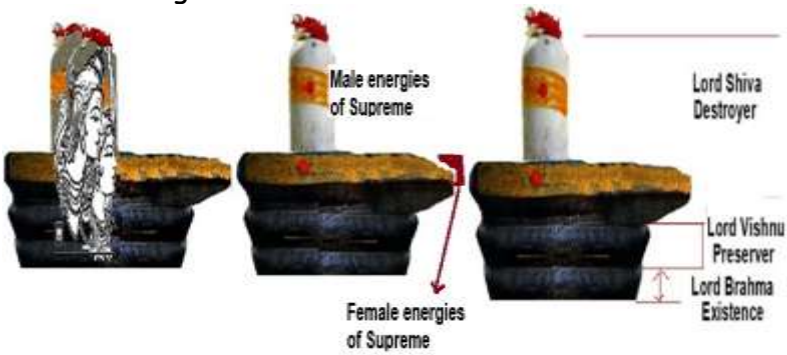
47. Different divisions of divines are explained in one of the later paras.

48. Over period of time, as migration from villages to towns began, the members of those families who relocated their place of stay to newer places used to visit their native villages whenever possible and continued offering prayers to their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity in their ancestral home land.

49. The elders always maintained that without the blessings of ones' Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, nothing good will happen in the family, even if they offered prayers to any one of the Ishta Devathas (favourite god) or the Gurus {Head of the mutt (monastery)} to which the family is attached.

50. It was custom to the families in south India, who for some reason or the other did not know their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, adopted either Lord Vaidyanathaswamy of Vaitheeswaran temple or Lord Venkatachalapathi of Tirupathi as their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity.

51. Their belief stemmed from the fact that Lord Venkateswara, an aspect of Vishnu is encompassed with the power of Trimurtis - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva - besides the power of Shakthi, the female divine energy of 'Supreme' and he appears in whatever form the devotees may want to worship and therefore is the root of all divines, quite possibly their Kula Devatha too would be one amongst them.



52. Similar is the case of Lord Vaitheeswaran, who is Shiva in the form of a Shiva Ling. The Shiva Ling is believed to be embodiment of Shiva and Sakthi - One half of Shiva Ling is supposed to be the male divine energy of 'Supreme' who created the cosmic and the other half is that of Shakthi- both embodiment of all divines. Brahma and Vishnu are seated below holding them over their head.

53. One cannot abruptly change their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity or choose another at will abandoning what their forefathers had worshipped through generations. Only by the act of nature, the worship of the specific Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity chain gets broken midway when the lineages had no male members or no children at all or some had only female children in the lineages. See chart attached below to understand it.

54. The worship of Kuladevatha/Tutelary deities continues in a family through male members only. Since the female gets married and goes to another house, her gothra changes to that of their husbands; her Kula Devatha also becomes another deity worshipped by her husband's family, putting an end to the worship of her parental Kuladevatha.

55. This is illustrated by the example shown in the picture below. For example, **let us assume that Mariamman is the Kuladevatha/Tutelary deity to six families**- all different groups.

- **Family No -1:** Suppose there are six children in a family- the first being male and the rest female- Mariamman continues to be worshipped as Kuladevatha/Tutelary deity, provided the first son bore male members as children. However, if the son bore no children, or he has demised, or he gets only female children, then Mariamman cease to be Kula Devatha for their family and their generation with the demise of him as he has male children to continue her worship. Mariamman will remain Kula Devatha to the rest of the five female members of that family till they remain

unmarried. The moment they get married, their Kula Devatha changes to that of their husband' side.

- **Family No -2:** Same logic applies as above. Mariamman remain Kula Devatha even after sixth member gets married in that family. If the sixth member too bore male child, then the worship of Mariamman as Kula Devatha will further continue through their 7^{th}, 8^{th} and 9^{th} generation provided the male members bore male children in their family. However, if none in the six members of the family possessed male child, the worship of Mariamman as Kula Devatha ceases for the generation of family No 2, after the death of the sixth member in that family.
- **Family No -3:** Same logic applies as above. Mariamman will remain Kula Devatha even after 6^{th} generation and onwards, provided the 4^{th} member bore male children or else it ceases with the demise of the 4^{th} member. The worship of Mariamman as Kula devatha cease to exist for the female members in that family once they get married.
- **Family No -4:** Same logic applies as above. Mariamman remain Kula Devatha even for the families of fourth and fifth members and will continue to 7^{th}, 8^{th} 9^{th} and so on provided they bore male children in their family. Otherwise, in the family tree of No 4, Mariamman worship as Kula Devatha cease to exist with the demise of sixth member if none -4^{th}, 5^{th} and 6^{th} family members had no male child.
- **Family No -5:** Mariamman remain Kula Devatha even after sixth generation member and will continue to 7^{th}, 8^{th} 9^{th} and so on provided they bore male children in that generation.

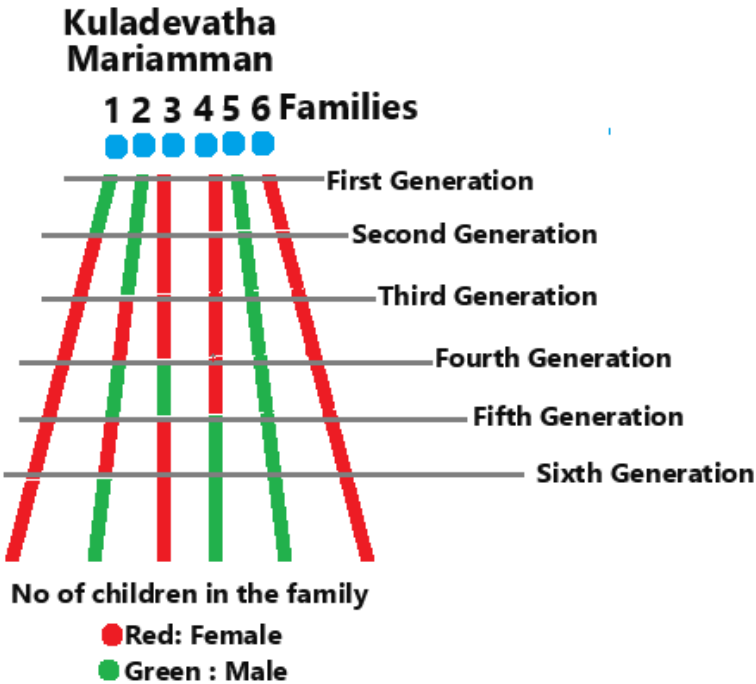
- **Family No -6:** Mariamman worship as Kula Devatha breaks for the generation of Family No-6, from the first member itself (one by one in the family tree) all the six members in that family tree of No 6 gets married.

56. Stories on the birth of Cosmic and appearance of divines were carried forward by word-of-mouth stories only as major texts of original Rig Veda and other important puranic texts of pre and post Vedic period, reportedly kept scribbled on palm tree leaves remain untraceable till date or believed to have been destroyed by nature, so opine the spiritual masters. Hence many of the texts belonging to the Vedic period which contained Kula Devatha worship too remained as word-of-mouth stories. However, since the same texts have also been reportedly preached to the divine sages by the divines themselves on many occasions, they may have ensured that the stories got percolated to the folks of the land by word-of-mouth stories and teachings.

57. Some of the spiritual organizations such as Brahmakumari Samaj, Gayathri Parivar, Dattathreya Parivar, Digambara and life stories of several Seers, Sadhus and Sannyasins hold these views strongly. It is also reportedly mentioned in a text called 'Rahasya Sthuthi' meaning secret doctrine that the principle and canon of creation has been narrated by Lord Vishnu himself to Sage Narada, but unfortunately the same text is also not available and floats only by word-of-mouth stories and folk tales.

58. According to the Puranic texts and beliefs, ever pervading 'Supreme', unknown, invisible super power, when decided to create Cosmic, produced out of his own body, a land consisting of water and in that he threw some seed

(the seed referring to creation) which turned in to be a Golden Egg. After carefully analysing all aspects for over a year , he broke the Egg into two pieces to convert them as Earth and Heaven and in between them kept empty space referring it as Aakasa (Ref: Manusmrithi Verses 1.8 to 1.13).



59. In Tripura Ragasya in Chapter 22 the origin of the universe has been described briefly. It states that The Supreme who was 'she' alone manifested vast cosmic followed by the release of three aspects of energies called Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. In the form of Brahma, he manifested cores and crores of creatures with several aspects which included the static and non static beings

and humans- several with female and male energies. In the form of Vishnu, he began to protect what Brahma has created. In the form of Rudra, he himself becomes destroyer of those evils from the endless ones created by Brahma and protected by Vishnu.

60. The act of releasing the Cosmic through an egg by the Supreme is perhaps what is described by the scientists as Big Bang Theory. If we believe the Big Bang theory, Cosmic or the Universe was created before 13.7 or 13.8 billion years while the Vedic scientists believe that it may have been much older than believed in the Big Bang theory. Whatever it be, the evolution have been gradual in the cosmic and it took billions of years to convert the space manifested by the 'Supreme' into liveable land.

61. What was the condition of the earth when the land emerged from 'Supreme' and how was it activated? The most accepted Big Bang theory is the leading explanation for how the universe began. It says that the universe as we know it today started with an 'infinitely hot and dense single point' that inflated and stretched.

62. The 'infinitely hot and dense single point' referred to by the Big Bang theory might have been Sun who may have been released by 'Supreme' along with the Cosmic, but to remain in invisible form. Most scientists agree that the atmosphere and the ocean accumulated gradually over millions and millions of years with the continual degassing of the earth's interior surface which was found filled with complete gas, which was water.

63. According to the theory floated by the scientists, the universe of the present day has developed in four to five stages from the time the cosmic was created.

Initially when the cosmic was created, it was filled with densely covered dust particles blocking visibility, filled with gas, molten rocks, and appeared completely dark without any light. Slowly over the years as the dust particles settled down, universe began to receive some form of light freed of darkness and the land began to expand. The scientists pointed out that around 4.5 billion years ago, no liquid water was present anywhere on Earth. The Earth was so hot that the rocks were molten (they were liquid).

64. Scientists opined that the water was present in the form of gas until the Earth cooled down, the water vapor condensed and rained back onto the surface of the Earth for millions of years which turned into ocean. Spiritually speaking the earth may have been cooled off by the invisible Moon and Vayu who may have also been released by 'Supreme' while Sun was released as they were responsible for the nature's act. As the water drained into the great hollows in the Earth's surface, the primeval ocean came into existence to become a huge ocean on land in the universe. The one who caused the rain, thunder and lightening in the form of volcanic eruptions was again the invisible Lord Varuna who would have also been created by 'Supreme'. In addition to Sun, Moon, Varuna and Vayu, one other created by 'Supreme' may have been Lord Indira who controlled the sky, lightning, weather, thunder, storms, rains, river flows etc as leader of heaven in tandem with other Lords. But all their acts may have remained in the background only for the purpose of moulding the earth released by 'Supreme'.

65. 'Supreme' was well aware that it would take several billions of years to get the Land and Ocean ready in place

to make them liveable as the Earth and the Ocean (water) were the most needed planes for the humans or the creatures to live and survive. Hence after the Earth was brought out from inside the body of invisible 'Supreme', next most important need was creation of Ocean (water) and few important divines which controlled the nature. Hence invisible Lords like Sun, Moon, Varuna and Vayu along with Lord Indira may have been released by him till the land and ocean were made ready and then they may have been absorbed back by the Supreme to manifest afresh through prime divines.

66. The scientific revelations support the theory that it has taken more than 13 billion years for the Earth and Ocean to settle down in the manner stated in pre paras to accommodate the living beings and hence 'Supreme' waited that long for the release of divines and other creatures. According to scientific studies 55 to 60 million years ago initial souls released by Brahma may have taken the shape of the primates which were in the form of 15-20 species from which some kind of human forms surfaced six to eight million years ago.

67. The spiritual masters believe that the earth consisting of vast sea and moving plane called Land imbibed with the qualities of four Yugas were actually lying inactive within the energies of 'Supreme' and they were brought out by 'Supreme' and activated before he began the creation through Brahma. The scientists support this belief when they say "For something to exist, there must be material or a component available, and for them (material or component) to be available, there must be something else available. Where did the material come from that created the Big Bang, and what

happened in the first instance to create that material?" (Ref: https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220105-what-existed-before-the-big-bang). The unanswered question to scientists 'where did the material come from that created the Big Bang' points out spiritually to invisible 'Supreme'.

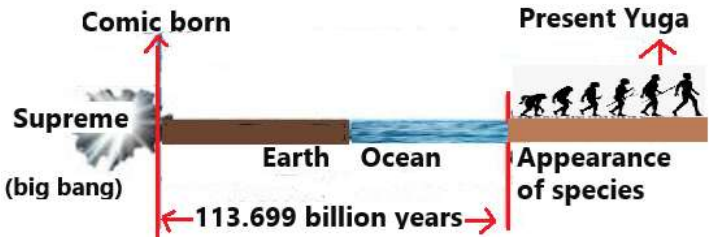
68. The universe churns into four yugas and ends at the end of the fourth when the Supreme annihilates everything by means of deluge and recreates everything afresh. In puranas though the Supreme is stated as 'He' and in some as 'She , the basic manifestation of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra have not been disputed greatly.

69. One may tend ask as to why we should discuss about the creation of Cosmic as our subject matter is Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities. Unless a portion of the aspects of creation is read and understood, the appearance and role of divines who had manifested from whom several divines including Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities manifested before the humans appeared would have remained unknown.

70. After the Cosmic with Earth and Ocean were created by 'Supreme', it may have taken something like 13.699 billion years for the universe to expand and expand to get ready with vital aspects like water in the Ocean, rivers and light to accommodate the souls, floating movable - immovable subjects, male and female souls and all other species of several types.

71. Therefore, the Pundits opined that 'Supreme' may have utilized the period of something like 13.699 billion years to create various divines forces from his divine energies and shaped them with the help of Divine Shilpi

Vishwakarma who was seated inside the body of 'Supreme'.



72. The undeveloped land and ocean was released by the Supreme and subsequently developed which took several billion years, to accommodate the humans. The Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities therefore did not manifest immediately after the cosmic was released by 'Supreme' since the land was not made ready to accommodate the humans. Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities were needed only to guide and guard families in area specific assigned to them; hence, prime divines from whom the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities came out were delayed by millions of years after cosmic was born.

73. The second reason for non manifestation of the family /tutelary deities immediately after the divines were created after the land and ocean were made ready was to give 'Supreme' sufficient time to work out the shape and appearances of several thousands of divines needed, which he planned to get only through the first three prime divines.

74. *Once the* three male energies took the forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra who was also known as Siva, three female energies too came out and took the roles in the name of Parvathi, Saraswathi and Mahalakshmi. The

three male energies and three female energies then joined together as Shiva -Parvathi, Brahma-Saraswathi and Vishnu-Mahalakshmi. In order to protect the universe, the Supreme released several divines through those three pairs of divines in different periods of time in the vast land.

75. The three pairs of divines which manifested released several divines from their energies. which turned out to demi gods, celestials and innumerable divine elements in the name of guardian divines for lands, protector for clusters of humans and in several other names.

76. There are conflicting views on who manifested first to release several divines including demi, semi gods, celestials and spirits many of which turned into Kuladevatha/Family/Tutelary deities several centuries later. etc

- The Shaivites say that Lord Shiva is supreme from whom the other two divines emerged. (Ref: Linga Purana, Chapter-3)
- The Vaishnavites say that Lord Vishnu appeared first from whom the other two divines emerged. (Ref: Narayana Suktham of Yajur Veda and Narayana Upanishad)
- The third view has been that Lord Brahma appeared first from the Cosmic Egg broke by 'Supreme' after which the other two divines emerged.
- The fourth view –Shaktism- says that matter came first as the Goddess, and from her came the mind, releasing three male forms: Brahma, the priest; Vishnu, the king; Shiva, the ascetic (Ref: Shrimad Devi Bhagavata Purana and Tantric purana texts)

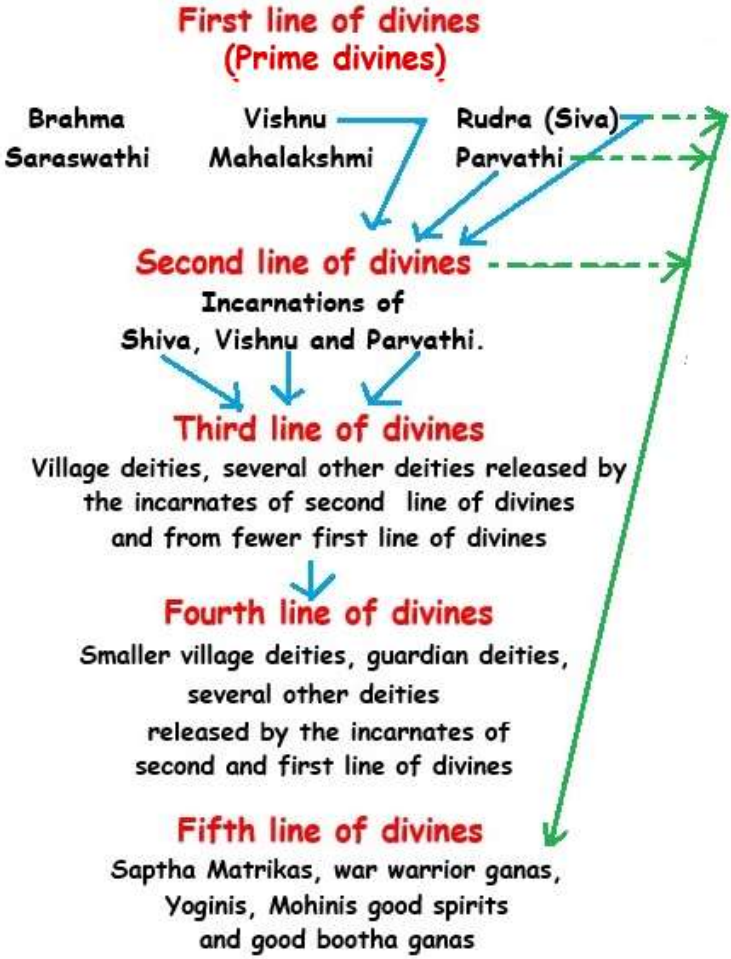
77. Whatever is said and believed, the basic fact that the three main male divines emerged from 'Supreme' were Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma and from them only came several other divines from whom came Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities much later in stages.

78. Thus, the Supreme created several layers of divines in the following order:

- **First line of divines**- Prime divines manifested like Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra (Siva), Parvathi, Saraswathi and Mahalakshmi. It is Claimed that Brahma was released from the divine energies of Vishnu. It is also claimed that even Saraswathi and Mahalakshmi were incarnates of Parvathi only.

- **Second line of divines**: Several incarnations of Shiva, Vishnu and Parvathi. Other three divines like Mahalakshmi, Brahma and Saraswathi did not release any other divines from them. Mahalakshmi has taken different incarnations of her own, but did not release and sub divines from her energies, because she herself

emerged from the divine energies of Parvathi and hence, any release of divines from her goes into the act of Parvathi only.


First line of divines
(Prime divines)
Brahma
Saraswathi
Vishnu
Mahalakshmi
Rudra (Siva)
Parvathi
Second line of divines
Incarnations of
Shiva, Vishnu and Parvathi.
Third line of divines
Village deities, several other deities released by the incarnates of second line of divines and from fewer first line of divines
Fourth line of divines
Smaller village deities, guardian deities, several other deities released by the incarnates of second and first line of divines
Fifth line of divines
Saptha Matrikas, war warrior ganas, Yoginis, Mohinis good spirits and good bootha ganas

- **Third line of divines:** Village deities, several divines released by the incarnates of second line of divines and even fewer from the first line of divines during the war waged against evil forces.

- **Fourth line of divines** such as smaller village deities (devathas), guardian deities (ganas), good spirits and good bootha ganas.
- **Fifth line of** deities such as Yoginis and Mohinis to help tantra worship, meant for certain sadhanas, sadhus and sannyasins who desired to heighten their spiritual knowledge.

80. Out of six prime divines who emerged from Parabrahman, why only Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, and Goddess Parvathi were authorised to release deities of several in nature including Kula Devathas?

81. Students and teachers cannot function in the same manner; each have their own restrictions. Brahma, who has been assigned the task of creation in the universe, releases various living beings and humans with cycles of birth-death and rebirth who were akin to students entering into an educational institution to learn the process of life. Since he can not create various aspects of humans alone, he does that work with the knowledge and wisdom received from Saraswati, who is the goddess of wisdom and knowledge. Since the living beings created are in the nature of students, they are to be guided by various deities who act like teachers. Since Brahma creates various aspects of mankind who were students, he was not authorised to create teachers, who carry entirely different aspects, the one which can be gained only from an experienced divine like Vishnu.

82. Once the Supreme created the universe, made ready vast land and ocean, he engaged divines for the creation of mankind, protect those created and destruct evils in them. The big task lay before Vishnu, the protector was how to protect and guide the mankind by

acting like a teacher, so that they could be driven into the path of leading life of morality and honesty. Only then there would be peace and prosperity in the vast land for long period of time. This is where the concept of Kula Devatha or Tutelary /Family deities emerged.

83. Brahma's creations were mixed bag of good and evil minded besides Asuric (demonic) forces like undisciplined students. Due to their inborn qualities of evilness, naturally the evil would refuse to mend their ways easily and similarly the Asuric forces would continue to terrorize the folks of the land who needed to be eliminated from the universe like students getting rusticated from the university.

84. Vishnu realised that while at one end if he had to act like a teacher to guide and guard the folks a fleet of divines will be necessary, on the other end the evils need to be identified and pushed to face punishment under the long process of divine law for which another set of divines will become necessary. Those acts will be the responsibility of several divines in the 3rd, 4th and 5th line of divines to be generated much later. Many of them will turn out to be Kula Devatha much later. One of the most important Kula Devatha released by Vishnu was Lord Venkatachalapathi who became not only Kula Devatha to many who adapted him, but also those families whose Kula Devatha remained unknown to them.

85. Unless those who are born meet death, there would be no space available to accommodate additional creations or even the existing creations. Since Shiva alone cannot perform the act of destruction in the vast universe, he has to perform this act with the help of fewer divines to be created or authorized by him aided

by his counterpart Parvathi. Many of the divines created by them too will turn out to be Kuladevatha/Family/Tutelary deities much later.

86. Act of destruction is of two kinds. Physical elimination and removal of Ignorance by bestowing wisdom to tread the path of spirituality and to get freed of sins. In the act of physical elimination, Shiva ensured that the act was carried out by one of the energies released through him, in the name of Yama.

87. Shiva and Parvathi- released several divine forces from their divine energies to not only fight and destroy the evil forces physically but also to destroy ones ignorance in the vast land . They included warrior divines too. Divines of various aspects thus released by them together included Mahishasura Mardini, Lalithambigai, Maha Kali, Nava Durga Devis, Dasa Mahavidya Devis, and Mariamman etc. Many of the divines thus released by the duo become Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity much later.

88. Whenever the Asuric (Demonic) forces surfaced, Shiva either released several divine forces from him to engage and destroy the evil forces from the universe or he transferred his divine energies to other divines to destroy the evil and Asuric forces on his behalf. Many of the divines thus released by him included important divines such as Muruga, 64 Bhairava and Bhairavis, Veerabhadra, Sharabha, Ashwathama etc to destroy asuric forces. Some of them became Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity later.

89. It will be interesting to know that all the divines released by Shiva did not become Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities. They were meant to bestow

wisdom to remove ignorance of folks such as Muruga in different manifestations, Dakshina moorthi, Bhairava etc. However, an important deity created by Shiva was Lord Vaitheeswaran who became the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity for many folks besides those whose Kula Devathas were not known to them.

90. This is how broadly how the divines appeared along with semi, demi divines which turned into Kula Devatha after several thousands of years. As previously said huge fleet of divines became necessary to guide and guard the folks on the vast land. It became necessary to segregate them into several groups of divines which needed to be created. Areas were to be earmarked for each divine so that there will be no clash of interests among them in future.

91. Once the broad-based principle on creation of divines were worked out by the Supreme next bigger question was creation of humans for whom the divines were needed.

92. Supreme while creating the vast land and ocean fixed in the mind of Brahma, the initial land size and ultimate size of land, no of souls which can take birth in different appearances and forms, how the souls will generate souls after souls and how all of them get destroyed after specific no of souls get created etc. Supreme also laid down how many divines of different natures are to appear, what will be their form and appearance in the vast land so that the souls which gets converted as human or other creatures can be guided and guarded and destroyed from time to time.

93. This is how the vast land created by the Supreme will gradually expand :

- Supreme will release vast land
- Land and Ocean will be developed
- Prime divines to be created by Supreme
- Several secondary, third line, fourth line and fifth line divines will be planned
- Brahma will begin act of creation
- Brahma planed evolution in four stages like Satya Yuga, Tretha Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga
- Yuga wise creations worked out vis a vis, the destruction of created calculated
- Brahma will create seven Maharishis
- Maharishis will train on complete plan of action
- Parabrahman will rehearse the creation for several thousands of years and train the Maharishis on each aspect in four dummy yugas
- humans and other creatures will appear
- divines will appear in land
- Kula Devathas will emerge

94. Brahma realized that entire souls can not be released in one go and gradually they will have to be released in stages. He also realised that the no of divines needed in each plane is to be released in coordinated manner by his colleague divines. Therefore, Brahma divided the period of creations and destruction to take place in four stages called Satya, Tretha, Dwapara and Kali Yugas.

95. Brahma realized that the vast land across the universe would have to be expanded gradually beginning

with Satya Yuga. The decision of Brahma to expand the land space was meant to accommodate increased populace who would get birth from the souls wandering in the floating plane which will alter the strength of souls from X quantum in first Yuga to say 2 x quantum in next yuga, 3 x quantum in the next yuga and so on. He took into account how much of those born will meet death, how much will get destroyed or their life span will come to an end etc in gradual stages. He thus, worked out the characteristics of the land accordingly. He was aware that no of divines to appear in each yuga should also be proportionate to the populace which will exist in each yuga.

96. According to Garuda Purana, initially Brahma created only 84 lakhs. If we properly understand the Garuda Purana text, which is stated to be the most authentic text in Hinduism, Brahma created 84 lac souls per Deva Year (God Year) in Satya Yuga. One Deva year accounts to 306 human years for Brahma. The life of Satya Yuga was 1,728,000 human years which is equivalent to 4800 Deva Years. Thus, the total no of active souls created in Satya Yuga at the rate of 84 lac per Deva year, could have been 403.200 million which may have included all creations like humans and animals and other creatures which had active life in them.

97. As per Garuda Purana, out of 84 lakhs created by Lord Brahma, 21 lakhs came from eggs, 21 lakhs from tree and plant vines, 21 lakhs from humans and mammals, and the remaining 21 lakhs were from worms and insects. This means only 25% of the souls initially created by him would have been in human form. Based on this information we can conclude that in Satya Yuga, out of 403.200

million souls created by Brahma, hardly 100 million souls may have been humans. However, how much divine forces were released simultaneously is not made known in any puranic texts or even folk lores.

98. Brahma did not fill the vast land with souls instantly after he began creation. First he created seven rishis for specific acts to spread divinity in the vast land. There are contradictions on the first batch of Hermits- Seven Rishis- created by Brahma. The Vedic school of thoughts, Jaiminiya (The Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana -जैमिनीय उपनिषद्-ब्राह्मण) mentions the list as Agastya, Atri, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Jamadagni, Vashishta and Vishwamitra, while another principal text called Brihadaranyaka Upanishad mentions same list but listing the seventh hermit as Brigu instead of Agastya. Similarly, the names of seven hermits vary in other principal texts of varying schools of thought.

99. One of the principal reasons for the creation of seven Rishis by Brahma was to categorise the entire human population under seven groups or Kulas, each Kula representing one of the seven Rishis initially created. The Kula represented the family of persons or descendants of a family related by blood. Therefore, the entire descendants of each Kula will have single distinctive Gothra representing one of the Saptha Rishis. Here again we find that in some caste they have more Gothras and thus over 2500 Gothras are reportedly existing in the universe.

100. Brahma, though created seven highly knowledgeable Maharishis and arranged to bring out many divines from the body of 'Supreme', he perhaps did not activate them in the land immediately and took time

to first allow things to settle down in each of the four Yugas and rehearsed everything in the first few Yugas.

101. Once created, the seven hermits stood before Brahma confused, as they did not know why they were created. Brahma informed them that they were created to act as his prime messengers when the universe gets activated. He explained to them all aspects of four Yugas, characteristics of souls in each Yugas, birth-death-rebirth circles for each of the souls, male-female theory, their partnership, children, ethics, norms in life, good and bad deeds, sins, their worship pattern, the manifestation of several divine forces in different appearances and shapes in different periods of time in different parts of the land. He further explained the importance of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity and how the souls will remain under the control of the divines, Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity who would guide and guard them in the lands they manifest and many more such details and directed that they wait in invisible and inactive form for the present till they get activated by him.

102. They were clearly told that as and when Brahma activated the hermits at appropriate time, they will have to begin educating humans on need of divines and paths of divinity so that the divine messengers in human form could also carry forward the preaching and teaching initiated to them thus articulating the Guru-Shishya relationship.

103. At the end of the doctrine by Brahma, the invisible Maharishis waiting for an opportune time to appear before public, got married with certain female souls created for them and entered in the land to

accomplish their task. All of them remained inactive and invisible studying the aspects of the universe in silence.

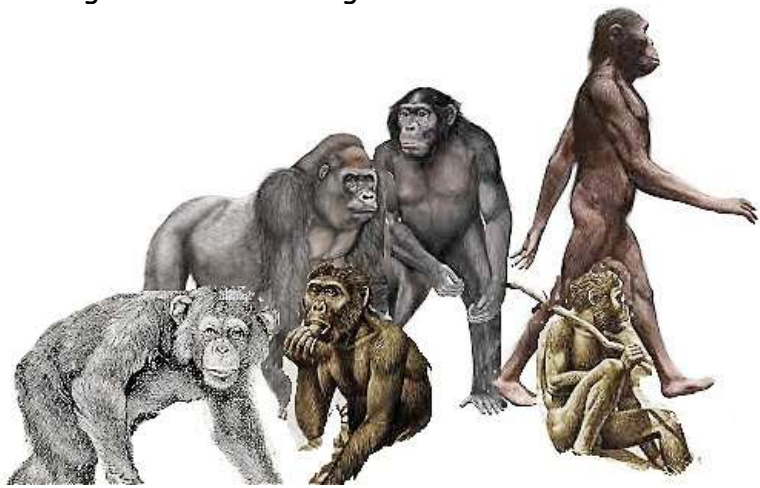
104. It took several thousands of years for the Maharishis to understand the entire philosophy of the Universe and the doctrines of Brahma as the subject matter was vast, minute and complicated.

105. The next act of Brahma was creation of souls to be sent to the universe. All the souls released by him did not instantly take birth as humans. The souls initially released by Brahma turned into 15 to 20 categories of species from whom some percentage of the species turned into humans millions of years later in the course of four to five stages of evolution. Why was the said situation created and why not humans directly created?

106. From the findings of the scientists of Archaeological and Anthropologists, it is clear that the initial creations of Lord Brahma might have been in the category of Anthropoidea (the bigger-brained monkeys and apes) and 15 to 20 categories including dinosaurs, and chimpanzees like figures, mammals, trees and plants of nature. The movables lived by the side of mountains and rivers in plain land or thick forested areas created by Lord Brahma.

107. The scientists who studied the aspects of the Universe (Anthropologists) opine that some form of humans appeared only few million years ago from the present Yuga. Though the first primitive primates in the category of Anthropoidea (the bigger-brained monkeys and apes, including humans) appeared 55 million years ago, our oldest human ancestor thought to have walked on two legs evolved only about 6 million years ago due to the biological changes that caused the tailless apes and

chimpanzees turn into the form of humans walking with two legs without knowledge.



108. As mentioned earlier, after Parabrahman released the cosmic it may have taken 13.699 billion years for the earth's natural environment to get transformed to become a place where diverse life forms, including humans, can thrive. We can therefore believe that no divines including Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities appeared for over 13.699 years after the cosmic was created .

109. Brahma needed time for the living creatures to slowly settle down on earth, get accustomed to the environment before a percentage of them get turned into humans. It again took thousands of years for those to gain knowledge and to understand what was around them and get accustomed with natural inhabitant places like mountains, caves, rivers, lakes etc.

110. Initially Brahma released from his body four broad based group of souls with certain aspects. Several

thousand years later those four broad based souls took the form of humans and further got divided into several groups or castes with endless branches after they gained sufficient knowledge. Only those four broad based groups of souls with certain aspects initially released by Brahma became four categories in human race.

111. **He meticulously** worked out specific time frame, Yuga specific characteristics to the souls who will live on the land and gain sufficient knowledge to distinguish each from the others. Brahma decided that the entire souls created in the first Yuga will not instantly get converted into humans, but part of the souls will remain floating on the plane awaiting their conversion into some form, in the land in Satya Yuga itself or will still be floating without getting any form till end of Satya Yuga. This concept of floating souls was to display to the universe, the male-female theory- both human and animals- whose interunion cause birth of a child- human or animal- by converting some of the floating souls on the plane into their child. This is how the floating souls got converted into human or animals in some form and fulfill the requirement of the Yuga specific population pre fixed.

112. **The** view that our oldest human ancestors, thought to have walked on two legs, appeared only 6 million years ago and that some divines too appeared on the vast land only during such period, tally with that of Rigvedic period. This thus support the view that the worship of deities may have also began during the said vedic period.

113. **The** narratives based on the vedic texts and history halts here and story on the emergence of divines

as narrated by word-of-mouth stories, discourses, as heard form temple priests and folk tales follows as given below.

114. **After creating** the vast land, Brahma divided the space into several pieces to facilitate the souls to go and settle in the spaces of their choice. He deliberately left the choice to the discretion of the human souls where to settle down. The clear picture on the demographic structure or terrestrial area of space created is not known, but pundits opine that they included entire universe covering mountains, rivers beside forested areas covered with thick trees and animals.

115. **The body of** those souls which settled in spaces which were imbibed with divine in nature automatically absorbed the good qualities and spiritual in nature embedded in those spaces.

116. **Similarly whichever** souls entered other spaces imbibed with other qualities, their bodies too automatically absorbed those qualities. This was kept as basic norms in canon of creation, lest one would not be able to realize the impact of good and evil or after effects.

117. **The spaces** imbibed with divine in nature were mostly occupied by the souls of saints, rishis and other spiritual minded folks while the rest of the spaces were occupied by other souls.

118. **After the humans** were activated, the seven Maharishis created by Brahma got activated and came out in open in those places where the souls turned into hermits entrenched. The seven Maharishis spent several days giving sermon to several divinely souled humans and turned them into the forms of Rishis, Sages, saints who

carried forward the messages of creation to the humans which appeared on the vast land during Satya Yuga which was the first Yuga released by Brahma.

119. **Several** thousand years passed, the task force consisting of Rishis, saints and sages created by the seven Maharishis moved all around where humans had settled and began to give spiritual doctrines and knowledge to the mankind the on the divine acts & plays.

120. **Now** this was the period when the divines started appearing on the vast land. They were sent by the first line of divines. While the first line of divines continued to stay invisible in the sacred land created in the vast space (above earth), they sent the second line of divines to the vast land to appear and enact divine plays.

121. **How to get** the folks fall into the spiritual world of divinity? The first act was infusion of fear in the minds of humans by unknown terrifying sounds and flash of eye breaking lights stating that those were due to the anger of the invisible divines; it was followed by preaching of ethics and norms to be practiced in one's life stating that practicing them will only tone down the anger of those invisible divines . Infusion of fear was necessary to force them to accept the theory of invisible divines who were to appear to guide and guard them as Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity at much later stages.

122. **While Brahma** was developing the universe from primitive stage to that of human habitants, there in Supreme Loga the appearances of divines were getting shaped.

123. **Deleted**

124. Though it is unclear as to how the divines whom we see today received specific appearances and shapes, the broader opinion is that they received their features and appearances inside the body of Parabrahman.

125. However, the matter for debate is how the prime divines like Siva, Maha Vishnu, Brahma and Parvathi were shaped inside Supreme. Were entire fleet of divines who were created and energized inside the Supreme sent to earth? Were features of each divine pre-determined? These are some of the most difficult queries that remain unanswered.

126. Some of the spiritual masters explain that even before the Cosmic was created several lakhs of invisible divines and deva ganas existed as divine energy rays within Supreme with certain characteristics and appearances. Supreme plane was centralized energy center called Loga of Supreme in which lakhs of divine energy rays remained stored. Remember that the earth and ocean were also lying inactive inside Supreme till he released them.

127. In the opinion of several pundits, prior to converting his energy rays in different forms and appearances, a principal architect of the universe Vishvakarma –Deva Shilpi- was created by Supreme to shape the appearances of divines within him (Supreme) in the form of divine energies. It is believed that the divine architect sitting inside the body of Supreme gave shape and appearances to the entire fleet of divines that included prime divines like Siva, Vishnu, Brahma and Parvathi.

128. The Rig Veda mentions about the role of Deva Shilpi Visvakarma and so are few more Upanishads.

Accordingly, Deva Shilpi Visvakarma brought out several images from his nave and used them as models for shaping the divine appearances. In the historical vedic religion, the role of Visvakarma as the builder of gods is attributed to Tvastar who was vedic artisan god or fashioner. Vedic Visvakarma is identified with Prajapati rather than Tvastar.

129. In later mythology, Visvakarma is sometimes seen identified with Tvastar who is a craftsman deity. Some of the vedic literatures indicate that Prajapati and Tvastar were associated with creation, though in different ways. Prajapati is indicated as 'lord of creatures' while Tvastar is shown as a skilled craftsman who fashioned and created implements and objects, including weapons and vehicles. From puranas and vedic literatures one thing remains clear- one or two craftsmen were responsible for shaping the appearances of divines and other materials needed for the vast land.

130. The divines thus created remained invisible inside Supreme, waiting for call to manifest. Once every form and appearances were finalized inside his body, the invisible cosmic was made visible and it was left to Brahma to chalk out the destination for the manifestation of the divines created, and Brahma was exclusively authorized to work out their time of appearance in the vast land liasoning with first line of divines.

Prajapathi or Tvastar or Vishvakarma

131. This secret was revealed by Brahma to the first sets of Maharishis. Sriman Narayana (Lord Vishnu) too revealed the said secret to Narada Muni by way of sermon called Rahasya Sthuthi. Few pundits also say that the secret was revealed to Parvathi by none other than Shiva himself when they were sitting alone in a cave in Himalayas. Their conversation was overheard by a divine bird which revealed the secrets to hermits and Rishis who transmitted the contents to the folks of the universe by word-of-mouth stories/folk tales.

132. Why were the divines shaped inside the body of Supreme? It is believed that the divine rays which were converted into some forms were needed to be energized suitably to play their active role in the cosmic. Unless the power rays were given some form and energized, it would not be possible for them to absorb or retain the scripts of their role in their body to display them whenever they descended on earth, lest there could be chaos in

interaction between divines and humans. Primarily for this reason, divine power rays were given some body shape and appearance to absorb and retain the scripts to practice and rehearse them in the invisible universe inside Supreme.

133. It is interesting to know that during the first half period after the cosmic had been created, invisible energisation process was taking place inside Supreme. During learning process inside Supreme some of the deva ganas and divines incurred curses for one reason or the other for their flaws; similarly, some of the prime deities too accrued certain curses.

134. After the land space was created, when the souls were sent to the universe, many of those divine forces in the form of divine energies too descended on the land and hid themselves in the spaces allotted to them in their own appearance as shaped by Deva Shilpi.

135. Though Sanathana Dharma believe that the features of the divines were known to the mankind only through Maharishi Ved Vyas who is credited to have included the illustrations of Hindu gods and goddesses in the texts compiled by him, but what contradicts the statement is that in those periods of time everything were only transmitted orally and reportedly written on palm leaves later. Perhaps those who compiled them in palm leaves, what Ved Vyasa orally told everyone might have understood the true features of the divines by constantly contemplating (meditating) on them and left the illustrations in palm leaves for future generation to copy them. When the divines emerged in the universe they were given a human sketch by few divine artists like famed Indian painter Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906), who

gave classical representations of Hindu gods and goddesses by understanding the divine features mentioned in the palm leaves or in the oral transmissions.

136. Now coming back to the story, after the land was made ready by Brahma with human habitants, he had to also position various other creatures, animals etc. Simulteneously he had to ensure that the divines released by various divines were to be allowed lands to settle in the spaces allotted to them.

137. Prior to sending the souls to earth, Brahma desired to split the divines into various categories and remain invisible in the spaces earmarked for them even before human souls reached there. The divines were to appear gradually as folks gained knowledge and belief to accept the divines.

138. In short, Brahma's creations included the several categories of divines to guide and guard the humans on earth.

139. The First line of deities were Prime divines in some form and settled in worship places or temples. They were mirror images of Shiva-Sakthi, but appeared in different other form with dual role to play. They enjoyed enormous divine powers to bestow or grant favors to the prayers of those who worshipped them regularly and in sincerity. They could enter any space on earth or air space, land or sea to protect the folks who pray to them sincerely. Besides, they also protected the sub divines working under them whenever their existence was threatened. They were also empowered to manifest in any form whenever and wherever needed to annihilate the evils and war mongering Asura and Draconian forces even if it lay beyond their area of control.

140. The first line of divines possessed unlimited territories to manifest and exercise their divine powers, however without defacing the basic norms of Brahma's scripts of creation. The first line of divines is in different appearances and names, the classic example being Shiva in the shape of Shiva Ling in many temples addressed in several names. To quote few are Murutheeswarar, Kapaleeswarar, Vaitheeswaran, Chokkanathar and Kumbeswarar etc all of whom appear in the form of a Shiva Ling. Parvathi is represented in the name of Tripurasundari, Lalithambigai, Kamatchi, Karpagambigai, Raja Rajeswari etc. Mahavishnu appears in the forms of Venkatachalapathi, Sarangapani, Srirangam Ranganatha swami, Puri Jagannath etc, etc. Normally all of them do not turn into tutelary deities; only some of them became Kula Devatha/Tutelary/Family deities through their incarnations.

141. Brahma realized that the folks in Satya Yuga called 'Yuga of truth' would remain free of greed, free of negativity, free of evilness, pure at heart and acts, free of anger and vengeance etc. Therefore, not much divine forces were needed to guide and guard them in Satya Yuga, but only subsequent Yugas required more divines. Realizing it he ensured that after the cosmic was created, increased number of divines in various forms and appearances were allowed to manifest beginning from Thretha Yuga and continued till the end of the fourth Yuga called Kali Yuga.

142. Brahma foreknew that with the dawn of every new Yuga, the mind culture and behavioral attitude and characteristics of humans would gradually fall from purity to darkness, and by the time the Kali Yuga emerge,

the morality of the mankind would have reached the lowest ebb.

143. Brahma was aware that yuga after yugas, the initially created souls would keep multiplying into several million souls even as land space would also increase to accommodate them till end of one Manvantara (306,720,000 human years) . Their behavioral pattern would also vary from Yuga to Yuga as the characteristics of the land would have its influence over their mind culture. Hence Brahma may have planned for the creation of more and more divine forces particularly Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities to take care of the increased populace in each of the Yugas. Perhaps this is the reason why we could see thousands of divine forces of all nature emerging afresh in different parts of the universe from Thretha Yuga itself compared to what has been mentioned in our puranic texts and epics.

144. After the land was made ready for the souls to settle down in the Satya Yuga, Brahma's creations began to turn into mild knowledgeable creatures. It is believed that the acts like worship of some kind of divine or formless divines began to emerge at a very, very low key and gained momentum somewhere in Thretha Yuga and Dwapara Yuga. As the humans began to gain knowledge, the folks who lived in each patch of land believed that something beyond their imaginations, super humans existed and therefore prayed to the unknown to guard them, which laid the foundation for perfect worship, later expanded to the emergence of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity worship.

145. The historians and archaeologists confirm that the folks of pre-Vedic period folks began to learn what

was known as worship and prayer. Therefore, they worshipped sun, moon, fire, trees, mounts, rocks along with some other unknown forms of nature like rains, thunder and stones fearing that they may harm them if not worshipped. Therefore, one can be sure that the divines with specific form or appearances did not exist during the Rigvedic period and everything began only from Satya Yuga onwards.

146. According to the spiritual masters, Satya Yuga was known as the age of truth, or golden age when humanity was governed by divine, and every manifestation or work was close to the purest ideal and humanity. As per Bhagavata Purana, the morality which was high in the initial yuga stood on four legs which were termed as austerity, cleanliness, compassion and truth.

147. Satya Yuga reportedly began sometime before six to seven million years, when advancement of knowledge began on good scale. It was a time of great beauty, compassion, and understanding and folks began to live in harmony with each other; there was great spiritual awareness too.

148. Repeat- deleted

149. Due to the continuous propagation of sages and saints who were got readied by the seven Maharishis created by Brahma, the feeble belief that someone more powerful than humans existed entered into the mind of folks; slowly the feeling turned into fear for unknown, ultimately leading to some kind of worship to the unknown in open spaces.

150. Since entire land across the universe in the initial stages were patches of land and bushy forested lands occupied by few humans along with animals, the

folks worship to stones, rocks and trees which were in vague in Rig vedic period continued to be performed in open spaces for long period of time. The folks feared to go near those specific stones, rocks or even certain trees fearing that something unusual, unknown spirits resided there and therefore stood from a distance and prayed to them to save them.

151. This was happening to the fine-tuned drama of Brahma who wanted the folks to begin accepting the existence of divine forces out of fear. The divines meant to settle in those places entrenched in them in invisible form and kept on increasing the fear of the folks till they completely surrendered to them.

152. The low-lying Maharishis with disciples, Rishis, saints and sages took the opportunity to convert the fear of the folks into some sort of worship pattern by orally transmitting stories to make the folks believe that the mysterious appearances were super humans- called divines - who had come there from space above (heaven) to guide and guard them. Slowly the first set of divines released by the prime divines too began to appear through mystery lightening, thunders, fearful sounds, ghost images etc in several areas and became group specific deities. This is how the group specific deities slowly turned into Tutelary/Family/Kula Devatha in the later stages began.

153. Each part of the land had unknown nos of invisible divine manifest. We need not dwell deeper in to different forms of worship which existed; it will be enough, if one understood that the concept of divine worship began only six million years ago in the vast land.

154. The second line of divines were assigned specific lands which were much bigger areas covered by the third, fourth and fifth line of divines. The Second line of divines were the shadow divines of first line of divines. They were sent to represent the first line of divines. The second line of divines too enjoined enormous divine powers because they were also energy rays of prime divines only but emanated through them. They could exercise their authority and divine powers fully to guide and guard the families under their command.

155. What is the actual difference between first and second line of divines? Not much difference except that the secondary line of divines were mostly manifestations from the first line of divines and rarely released from the body of 'Supreme' at the request of Brahma. Though the divine powers vested in them were also the same like the first line of divines, the scope of their authority were restricted to limited areas and for controlling specific groups of divines under them. They were mostly meant to be seated in the shines and temples to bless those who worshipped or prayed to them. They do not normally become Kuladevatha/ family /tutelary deity except in very rare cases. However, they manifested in different forms, or took several incarnations for specific tasks assigned to them. Some of their incarnates however turn into Kula Devatha or tutelary deities much later.

156. The third line of divines were sub divines functioning under second line of divines. They come from sinned or cursed Deva ganas, especially the one who accrued the maximum sin or curse during their stay in 'Supreme' Loga, but also include those who assisted the other divines in some war or other events. They also

stood as the Guardian deities of the temples of prime divines. They manifested as human or as animals and then turned into Village deities, guardian deities and local deities. Once they became Village Deity, they assisted all other divines who were present in several areas besides guarding the boundaries of space where all of them manifested. Some of the Village deities were also the incarnations of second line of divines.

157. The concept of Kuladevatha/Family/Tutelary deities are in vague only in the southern part of India, while there is no such larger concept in the North. There were several castes and not families which are identified with specific deities whom they worshipped as Ishta devatha or devathas meant for their clan.

158. In north India the concept of Village Deities is mostly unknown except in parts of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa where the tribal are concentrated who worship some form of Village Deities. Otherwise in general, Lord Shiva's Ganas and Snakes, Mohinis, Yogins, Kali, and Lord Bhairava are kept in the village entrances or in the first reachable temples to stand guard to their villages. Some of the statues used to be in half body, some have only the face of some Deity or simple Stone that were worshiped. They believe that the said Deities stand guard to their area. Apart from it they also believe that Lord Anjaneya is the Guardian Deity. May be this belief has been the reason to find several temples with Anjaneya installed in the form of a simple stone painted in orange colour. Those temples used to be the place where Anjaneya resided to guard the Village from attacks of evils.

159. Only from the third line of divines and below, the Kuladevatha/Family /tutelary deities emerged in southern India. Village deities are worshipped by villagers as a part of a long, continuous tradition in rural India. The famous Village deity Kathavarayan is believed to be the incarnate of Muruga who incurred a small curse from Shiva and born as Kathavarayan to atone the sin. Another famous Folk deity called Madurai Veeran, a cursed Devagana from Devaloga is believed to protect city Madurai and Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple. He is also worshipped by many as their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity. The other Village deities include Ayyanaar who is reportedly the incarnate of Aiyappa besides Sudalai Madan, Ezhu Kanniyar and Sangali Karuppan etc. The seven virgins and Kanakampikai Amman is the guardian goddess of the Vanni region in Sri Lanka.

160. How do the Devaganas turn into Village/Guardian deities? Those of the Deva Ganas who came down to earth, either born as human or entered into the body of human or animals, displayed heroic acts through them and at the end of the penance period they became folk deities in the name of Village/Guardian deities. Once they became Village/Guardian deities, they were given some responsibilities and limited divine powers. Though the folk deities with those limited powers cannot answer the prayers of devotees for personal benefits, they were noble enough to get the boons bestowed through their master Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity of that area. At the same time, even with those limited powers the Village/Guardian deities were able to prevent the evil spirits and demonic spirits (who carried sins in deva Loga

and born to atone their sins) from entering into the village and drive them out from the village.

161. Over a period of time, the folk deities, who were in the fourth line of divines appeared in the dreams of some of the folks and commanded them to accept them as their family god and worship them in a particular manner. The sufferings of those families who offered worship to the folk deity when begin to recede, partly with the discreet support of the folk deity's master Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities, more families began to consider the folk deity as divines. In this manner the folk deities slowly marched into the bandwagon of tutelary deities.

162. Though the folk deities, fourth line of divines, could effectively prevent the natural disasters causing destruction in the villages, they were unable to destroy all the evil ghosts and evil spirits because few of them were created by Brahma for certain reasons. However, the folk deities were able to drive away the ghosts and evil spirits from their area of control. As the performance of the folk deities begin to increase, more and more powers as enjoined by a Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities were bestowed on them by Brahma to fall into the line of divines.

163. However, the fourth line of divines do not normally become Kuladevatha/Family /Tutelary deities, but remain guardian deities to the entire village which they represented. They assist the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities in many manners and carry out their command by working under them. Therefore, some group of facilities in the interior villages adapt them as their Kula devatha.

164. The fifth line of divines are blessed ganas who entered into the body of humans or animals and turn into angels or village guardian deities over period of time. Staying inside the body of some one in the village, the devaganas render several good deeds to the villagers. They thus draw the appreciation from the villages and receive respect from the locals.

165. After the demise of those humans or animals from whose body the fifth line of devaganas functioned, they were buried and a memorial pillar or inscription stone will be erected over them thus converting the spot into place of a kind of worship. The souls inside their body of those dead would settle in those sites in invisible manner and continue to protect the village as guardian deity or guardian angel because they carried some aspects of divine powers received from first and secondary line of divines who sent them to become angels in those villages. Several years later some of them turn into Kula Devathas of poor villagers in those areas, and never migrate to any other areas.

166. The next most important question that arises is how does the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities get identified by the families ? The deities of all varieties manifest in the lands allotted to them and then reveal their presence through the dreams of some of the villagers or spoke through those who were afflicted with trance in the village festivals. They conveyed to the villagers that such and such divines are in such and such place and if they were worshiped or prayed in those places, all their problems would get redressed.

167. As stated in earlier each and every one of the deities were allotted specific area and land for

manifestation and specific group of people who would be under their control allotted to them. Thus, the divines can not go and manifest in any other land of their choice as all acts of the divines were pre determined and they were sent accordingly. Therefore, the divines will target only those folks who were designed by Brahma to be under their control.

168. Besides letting the folks know of their stay through dreams and trance, they also deliberately created artificial problems which compelled the folks to seek divine intervention to get relief. Unable to get relief elsewhere, the folks will go to those spots as foretold by the divines, offered prayers as commanded, and in few days, their problems which had been artificially created by the invisible divines will vanish.

169. While the artificial problems created were vanished by the act of those divines, which became Kula Devathas later, the genuine problems of others and the nature's fury were also contained by the hidden divines through the intervention of their master first or second line of divines the secret of which were not known to the folks of the land.

170. Deleted

171. In short, to generate tutelary deities over a period of time, Brahma initially enacted several plays through the invisible deities sent to their respective places. Everything happened to the fine-tuned plan of Brahma, whose ultimate aim was to establish the concept of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities worship on earth.

172. Why should group of Kuladevathas created? It is similar to how the govt function with layers of

administrators. The first line and second line of divines were meant to address the problems and safeguard the land and the folks sitting in main lands. They had to take several incarnations to settle the issues for which those incarnations were needed and therefore they cannot get confined themselves to one small group of folks or smaller lands. Their role was major. Therefore, as their agents, several deities were created and sent by them to smaller areas to address the problems of folks and the lands.

173. Most of the Kuladevathas were cursed and sinned Devaganas, initially turned into smaller deities (from third line of divines) over periods of time. Prior to enter into the vast land of humans, they were divine energies inside Supreme when for billions of years when the rehearsal was taking place inside the body of Supreme to train them to occupy the lands after the vast land and ocean was released by him .

174. During the rehearsal inside the body of Supreme, many ganas incurred sins or got curses. Therefore, they were ordered to take birth along with humans stay invisible in the vast land allotted to each one of them and suffer divine punishments for certain period of time to get back the divine status again. The punishment was to remain in arduous tapas/meditation for long period of time seeking pardon for their wrongful acts. Thereafter they were allowed to reveal themselves as devaganas to the folks of the land at appropriate time line as programmed by Brahma.

175. The nature of sins acquired by the Deva ganas in 'Supreme' Loga is different from the humans who get afflicted with sins on earth. Both are different. Those

Deva ganas and divines which deliberately evaded their duties in 'Supreme' Loga were afflicted with sin/curses, which was considered to be more heinous crime than the sin acquired by the one on earth and had to undergo severe punishments over long period of time to get them reversed.

176. This is how the sinned ganas who came to earth to get relieved of their curses struggled for long period of time till some first line of divine intervened to pardon and relieve them of their curses or sins and get back their guardian deities, village deities, Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity status to them. But none of those divine dramas were known to the folks of the land and only spiritual masters and divine incarnates understood them.

177. If one read the texts in Puranas and history of temples, they will find many stories stating that several divines manifested as human and penanced to get the curses reversed in specific spots indicated to them on earth. During the atonement period they were allowed to exercise only very limited divine powers in discreet manner to benefit mankind but were not allowed to exercise full powers because they had to suffer in human land to atone their sins.

178. The norms of Brahma were very clear in this sphere. If the divines were permitted to carry out their entire divine energies when they were in human form, they could misuse them to soften the nature of punishments during their stay on earth. Similar to the humans who struggle to get freed of their past karma through prayers, services etc, in the same manner the cursed divines who came to the earth for penance should

also get freed of their karmas (sins/curses) only by struggle and therefore to prevent misuse of divine powers the powers were curtailed during the period of penance.

179. In earlier parts of my article, I had mentioned that before sending souls into space on earth, Brahma divided the spaces into several divisions, each imbibed with several qualities, the qualities which were not uniform with one another, and the souls which reached there absorbed those qualities which were in the form of energy rays. The qualities were both negative and positive in nature and in the form of energy rays. Here too Brahma deliberately left one issue open. Similar to the freedom given to the souls to choose their area of destination on spaces, Brahma's norms mysteriously did not specify the kind and quantum of the characteristic rays of the land to be absorbed by those who landed in that space but was left to the discretion of the souls.

180. The traditional folks still believed in the worship of multiple divine forms instead of confining themselves to only Kula Devatha worship for their spiritual enlightenment, safeguard families and for progress in life. However, they did not entirely abandon worship of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity who may either be a male or female divine as worshipped by their ancestors in their families.

181. The concept of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity worship prevail on high note only in India, especially in the southern part of India. Hence this article is mostly confined to the worship pattern in India and only for comparison of the divine worship pattern in different other countries in the universe where some of the folks

worship household deities similar to Kula Devatha worship as seen in our country. The information on them have been given in concluding paras.

182. Were entire humans born on land worshipped some form of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity? Who guided, guarded and granted the prayers of humans who had not adapted any tutelary or family deity?

183. Not entire human race had Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities. Only those belonging to families who had Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity for generations continued to worship them while the rest worshipped other divines of their choice in the same area or elsewhere as Ishta Devathas (Divine of liking), got guided and guarded by their grace as long as they worshipped them sincerely.

184. What about the powers of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family? Where will they all settle? Can the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities move over from one territory to another or will they have multiple territories to control?

185. The divine rule was such that the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity would enjoy enormous powers like first and second lines of divines in all respects as they were also manifestations through their divine energies sent to carry on their duties and to function independently without interference from other divines.

186. The divine rule was that the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity or any other divines manifested in an area remain confined to their territories alone and remain non interfering in each other's domain.

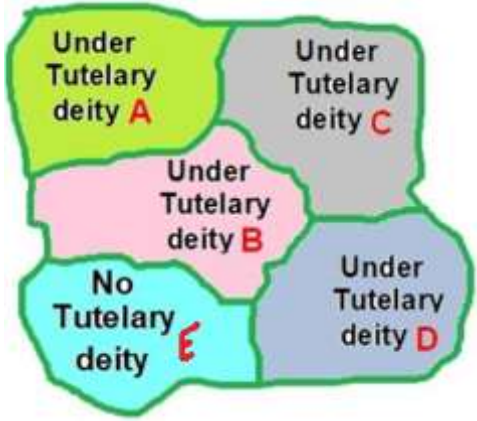
187. Though specific territory may have been allotted for divines in the initial stages, geographical changes which include erosion, migration of people, desertification and globalization could alter the characteristics of the land. Therefore, their authority will also increase subject to the condition that the expanded territories have not been allotted to any other divine by Brahma. This is another divine rule.

188. Human migration involved the movement of people from one place to another territory either in family units or in large groups for whatever reasons. In such scenario when people in mass scale migrate to another land, who would guide and guard those folks who had worshipped Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity in the land from where they migrated?

189. In order to safeguard their interest and guide them, the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity of migrant forces too, were allowed to enter into others territory and exercise control over those who were already under their custody in the earlier land from where they migrated. At the same time, the divine rule stipulated that the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity thus entering into others territory will not in any manner interfere into the working of the other Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity already functioning there for some other group of folks.

190. Similarly, the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity under whose command the territory lay will also not obstruct to the entry of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity from other territories to visit their territories guide and guard those migrant folks who were under their control in the territories from where

they migrated. Both sets of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities will have to confine to the act of safeguarding only those folks assigned to them thus strictly adhering to the rule of divine framed.



191. How does this system work? Let's assume that in a village called Nalamangala, 200 families were under the command of four Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities and a territory non represented by any Kula Devatha as assigned by Brahma too exist. Each Tutelary/Family deity or Kula Devatha, (Say A,B,C and D deities) had say 25 to 30 families each under their control. The remaining families (those without Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities), say around 50 or more, in no family deity area (E) were left to worship some other divines of their choice as Ishta Devatha or in any other name or belong to any other religion either in the same space (the Village or towns are referred in this article as space) or elsewhere beyond the said territory.

192. Let us say for some reason or the other, some members of a family (Let us call them 'A' group) perform

Yagna or other Pooja praying their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity or Ishta Devatha or some prime divines **to harm** certain family (Let us call them 'B' group) inimical to them.

193. Howsoever powerful the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity of 'A' may be, or the prime divines who were prayed, they cannot unilaterally accede to the request of 'A' group to harm 'B' group who sincerely and regularly maintained worship of their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity and had also not actually committed any crime against members of group 'A'.

194. Therefore, before granting the wishes of 'A' group , the divines who were prayed would have to first consult the tutelary deities of 'B' group and discuss the issue and if need be act to benefit 'A' group after getting the consent of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity of 'B' provided the prayers of 'A' group was genuine.

195. Repeat Deleted

196. As per divine norm if arbitrary decisions are taken by the divines to cause harm to the families under control of another Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity /or deities and without mutual consultation, such divine acts would be construed as violation of divine norm and infringement into the divine rights of the other deities; the awarded boon will fail to cause ill effect. The illegally acted divine will lose their divine power temporarily for some period of time as mark of punishment.

197. Since the devotees of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities are ring protected with the divine rays of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities, the incoming harmful energies of group 'A' deities

will get blocked unless they had the prior permission from deities of 'B'. The divines which defy the rule and attempt to arbitrarily rule over the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity will get attracted by sins or curse from Brahma and lose their divine powers temporarily.

198. This is how in one manner or the other even the prime divines too get curses unknowingly. Thus, the regular and continuous worship of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity give protective cover to those families under the guard of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity.

199. There is however a small rider in this norm too. Since the divines are also meant for establishing law of justice and love amongst mankind, if the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity finds that the group 'B' had been wanton sinners against group 'A', then the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity of group 'B' would temporarily withdraw their protective cover from group 'B' to ensure that the canon of divine justice by way of boons given by divines to group 'A' are not blocked in any manner.

200. How does the punishment of divines leave effect and defaulters punished? Let us continue with the same group. Once the prayers of group 'A' is answered, then the resultant boon gets converted into the shape of negative energy rays and reach the person or group concerned say group 'B,' (who were engaged in the act of wrongful acts) and intrude into them activating harmful effects mentally thereby taking away their happiness and health. To allow the punishments to take place, the Kuladevatha of group 'B' will remain inactive. This results in endless struggle and mental agony to the 'B' group destabilizing them in many ways.

201. At the same time the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity are also empowered to condone the punishment at later stage when the punished group 'B' continuously and sincerely prayed (without knowing the reasons for their sudden suffering) to their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity seeking relief from their problems. Upon satisfied with their sincere prayers, the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity could revoke the punishment given by the other divine, after due consultation with the divine which meted out the punishment. There are many such hidden norms and riders that curb the unilateral decisions of divines against fellow divine acts which remains beyond the scope of humans to clarify or understand.

202. In order to maintain the dignity and honour of the divines, Brahma has incorporated several such norms for the functioning of divines as he was aware that the entire fleet of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity are

the same energy rays of 'Supreme' and therefore insulting or degrading the powers of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity or infringing into others domain without due care would be tantamount to insulting their manifestation and the purpose for which they had been sent to the vast land.

203. All the above will illustrate that similar to the humans, the divines are also covered by certain norms in exercising their power and authority. All these have been done to show to the universe that the rule of law and justice is not limited to the mankind alone, but also applicable to the land of divines- Devaloga.

204. Like present day computer, Brahma may have possessed something similar to meticulously work out details of space in which specific sets of divines of various nature, angels or other souls would manifest. He has to monitor all acts meticulously including death and birth of souls sent by him to earth. He has to monitor the acts of divines etc, etc.

205. The Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family and other divines will go and manifest only in the earmarked spot (spot does not mean a one square feet or square yard in size, but spread over few square meter area). Lord Brahma established this norm so that the deities and divines earmarked to a particular space need not get confused over the spots where they would manifest.

206. After manifesting in the area allotted, the deities ground their divine powers in those spots and get themselves enshrined on the same spot either in a shine or in open spaces in any form as they desire. No norms are stipulated for them and those divines were permitted to choose an appearance and form of their liking and

convey the same to the humans either through their dreams or through those in trance to ensure that their statues or idols of worship are accordingly carved out by the people for enshrining in the spot where they get manifested.

207. One clear norm of Brahma was that wherever they manifested, that spot would get fully sanctified, grounded with divine energies of those who manifested there so that those who reach and pray in the spot could get invisible divine energy protective cover that will guard and guide them in many ways in their life.

208. Wherever the deities wanted to settle down as ordered, as said earlier, first they went and hid themselves in some place and informed about their places of hiding in the dream of the locals. After the locals reached the places, dug out the idols, they enshrined it in the same place which later became the shrine of the deity found inside the spot. Thereafter the folks began to visit the same temple and offered prayers and obedience.

209. Thus, they became the local temple for the locals who settled there . In this manner in each and every village, in some manner or the other, the deities who were destined to settle there, got themselves identified through the locals and in due course of time became Kula Devatha or tutelary/family deities to the locals there.

210. Can a divine who originally manifested in the space earmarked for them, again manifest in another space? This doubt arises because the same deity in the same form and name is found in many other temples spread in different spaces and the pundits in those

temples say that one could offer prayers to the same deity in any of the temples where they have been enshrined.

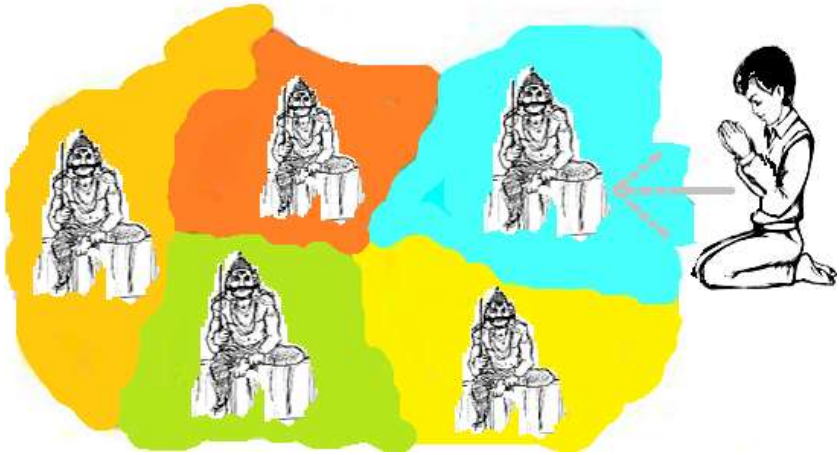
211. Their contention is incorrect and not acceptable as per divine norm. At the same time, the divine norm does not prohibit offering prayers to the same deity in any of the temples spread in different other spaces other than the original place where they had manifested first.

212. Therefore, those who offer prayers to their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family in other temples will certainly receive the blessings in the normal manners bestowed to everyone, but the extent of blessing received would be far different from offering the prayers in the main temple, as the divine rays floating in the plane will be far different in other temples compared to the ones floating in the main temples where the deities were originally enshrined.

213. Let us study this by an example. Though many shrines exists for Aiyanar in different villages spread across Tamilnadu, the family of one Sundar worshipped one Aiyanar deity in Namakkal village (shown in blue colour) as their Kuladevatha.

214. The other Aiyanar temples (same image and similar in all other aspects) existed in different other villages and towns (shown in other colours like yellow, orange, green, darkish yellow etc). Assume that the family of Sundar migrated to the dark yellowish shown village and continued to offer worship in the Aiyanar shrine treating it as his Kula Devatha. He completely stopped visiting the original village (Blue in colour) to offer prayers in his Kula Devatha shrine and continued

to offer rituals and prayers only to the Aiyanar (in dark yellowish zone), treating the same as his original Kula Devatha (Aiyanar) .



215. Will his prayers get accepted by his Kula Devatha and his act endorsed as acceptable? The worshipper will no doubt get blessings of Aiyanar in the dark yellowish zone to the extent of his prayer and rituals, but he will not beget the blessings he will get to the same magnitude or degree from his Kula Devatha -Aiyanar seated in the blueish coloured village, nor will the rituals to Kula Devatha be accepted by his Kula Devatha- Aiyanar in bluish coloured zone.

216. There is a small rider class in it. Sundar's original Kula Devatha Aiyanar as worshipped by him in his native village (Bluish coloured area) will however bless him fully and accept his rituals done to him in any other temples , in any other area, provided he or any of his family members continued to visit the original temple at least once in few years and offer prayers there because the divine power energies specific to his Kula Devatha lay grounded only in

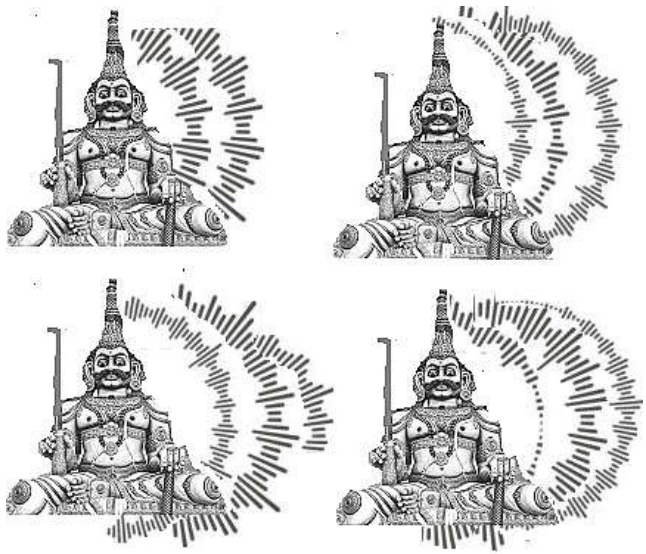
the prime temple spot (shown in Blue colour) where it had originally manifested and became the Kula Devatha of his family.

217. Even though the same deities in other temples may have been enshrined with full vedic rites and rituals which also draw divine energies (the rituals in fact are prayers seeking the divine energies to be ground there) of the same divines, the effect would be far different than the direct divine energy one may receive in the original place where they had manifested.

218. The direct divine energies float in the space where the divines had actually manifested and intrude into the bodies of those who go and offer prayers to their Kula Devatha there. This is what is seen as vibration as felt by many of the devotees while praying in the specified place. This does not mean that the family members whose Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity which is shown in blue coloured space, will not bless them if they prey to her in another temple as shown in yellow, dark yellow-, green- and orange-coloured areas. The Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity will certainly understand their plight and protect and guide them provided the family members visit the main temple at least once or twice in their life span and offer prayers there. Unless this is done, the blessings of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity would not be fully received by the devotees.

219. Sometimes the manifested divines (tutelary/family deities or other divines) also intruded into rocks or boulders or other lifeless objects (lifeless in outer appearance though each has their own invisible life in them) or remain in anthills for few years before they get traced or dug out. Once they enter into the rocks or

boulders, those structures get infused with their divine energies and get reshaped matching with the appearance. Centuries later those statues get dug out as commanded by them, and enshrined in a shrine and worshiped there. Those temples where the original idols had thus been installed will have the powerful divine energies floating in the space which could be felt when one visit there. Such powerful divine energies released direct from the divine will not be available in other temples where the same divine idols were installed.



Although the same Aiyanar is enshrined in different areas, they release different divine rays from them, which are specific to them in that area, where they have been enshrined. The same Aiyanar in one area will not be able to release the same kind of divine rays in another area

220. Deleted

221. Some of the divines never revealed their identity till they completed their penance on earth to get rid of their sins or reversal of their curses. Before returning to devaloga they ensured that the mortal body inside which they stayed during penance get buried below earth or sunk in rivers.

222. The mortal bodies of divines which lay buried deep inside the earth, became statues over period of several hundred years. Only after the bodies turned into statues, the divines informed the villagers of the same through some means, when they were dug out and few of them got enshrined in small shrines, rest placed under the trees in the rural areas and worshipped. Those deities thus enshrined became Kula Devatha to many families in those villages.

223. Some of those villages when turned into cities, the shrines in them slowly grew into magnificent temples during the reign of great kings who were eager to establish bigger temples when they heard of the powers of those deities. Thus, many of the temples which were initially consecrated with the statues and idols unearthed in many ways (Swayambhu or self-manifested idols) either became the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity to some of descendants of families or remained as temples of commoners. This is also the reason why the temples and Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity as worshiped by most of the family members are still found in remote villages or difficult to reach terrains in forested areas, over the hill, fields, and other remote places.

224. Deleted as the contents have been merged in this article.

225. We have to understand the basic fact that the exact period or the place where the temples or some kinds of worship shrines were constructed has not been conclusively established. But according to the historians, even during the vedic period, there were no shrines or temples, but during AD 1500 to AD 1600, few worship places similar to the temples were discovered in Afghanistan but not in India.

226. Similarly, though existence of temples were discovered in many parts of Asia such as Cambodia, Thailand, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Africa surprisingly no such shrines or temples were seen in parts of India during that period nor idol worship noticed. However, in the much later part of vedic period few shrines where some idols have been worshipped in which some kinds of mantras have been chanted, were seen deep inside the villages. The idols in them were called guardian deities or Village deities. Most of such places of worship were found in make-shift small huts constructed with mud without top roof or were inside small caves as seen here and there.

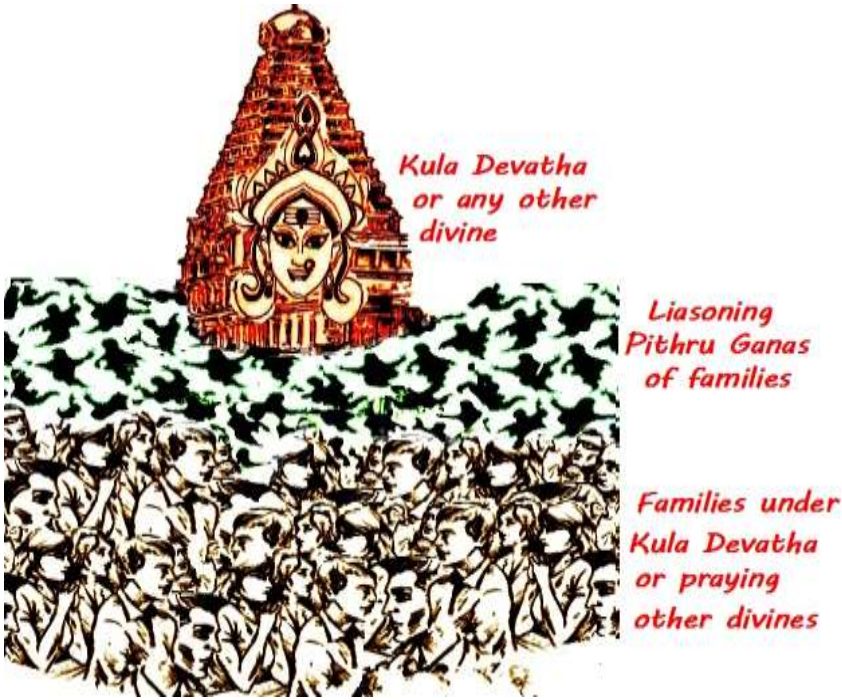
227. The floating divine energies in those places where the idols of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity were dug out and enshrined embrace the body of the devotees like an invisible cover lasting for some period of time (the extent of period for which the said temporary protection lasts is not known) and block the entry of negative energies intruding into them. Perhaps this is the reason why the ancestors have laid out the principle of visiting the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity temples everyday if they stayed near the temple vicinity or at least visited once a

year to retain the protective cover of divine energies on them.

228. Some may wonder when several thousands of folks have adapted a deity as their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, how is it possible for the deity to personally reach each and individual to guide and guard them? The Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity does not liaise with the individuals or the family directly. Every Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity has fleets of invisible ganas to work on their behalf. Kula Devathas also release from each one of them several lakhs of divine rays to protect those who are under them.

229. Who are those ganas? Several demised forefathers and ancestors of each family members remain as Pithru ganas in Pithru Loga. The moment a family chooses their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, immediately the Pithru ganas of those family are called upon from Pithru Loga by the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity to act as the liasoning ganas between those families and the deity. They in invisible form carry the messages and orders of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity to their family lineage.

230. It is not only the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity's command that the family receive thorough Pithrus, but also the commands of other divines prayed by the families are also sent through only through the Pithrus to ensure that they reach the proper person who could be identified only by their Pithrus. Since every family is guided by the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity through the Pithrus of their families, it is always said that the Pithrus are to be kept happy in Pithru Loga by performing necessary rituals meant to appease them.



231. The divine principle has been that even if any one of the family members visit the main temple site of their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity to offer worship at least once in three to five years as a mark of respect to their family deity, that would be sufficient to absorb the invisible divine protective cover which gets automatically transferred to each and every one of their family members when they return back even if they remained in faraway places because the divine rays of pleased Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity would travel to any length of distance to protect their members.

232. It does not mean that those who had not adapted the same deity as their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity but visit the same temple to offer worship are

denied the protective cover. Anyone who visit the temple and offer prayers, too are provided positive energy rays in the form of blessings and protect them only for short period of time, but not to the extent of protective covers received by those who have adapted the said deity as their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity .

233. Similarly, when a family who held a specific deity as their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity if chose to ignore the worship of their family deity for any reason, the act would be construed as heinous crime and seven generations of the defaulter's family would bear the brunt of the of the anger of their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity thus necessitating the family members of their successive generation to get rid of the sin with several forms of rituals or Vrath or prayers to appease the anger of their family deity.

234. Lastly, it is also surprising to note that over 90 % of the Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities have emerged from rural spaces. As said earlier, their divine powers were also not lesser to the prime divines and were empowered to directly grant the favours for those who had adapted them as Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity. At the same time, the very same tutelary deities were also empowered to answer the prayers of those who had no Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities but accepted them as Ishta Devatha or general deity in that area. Again, while answering the prayers of general folks, the deities also ensure that the groups under their command were not affected in any manner.

235. It is seen that compared to divines manifested in the first three Yugas, more and more manifestations are seen during Kali Yuga. There is manifold increase of divine

forces in the present Kali Yuga compared to those mentioned in Vedic scriptures, Ramayana and Mahabharata and many other texts in Hinduism.

236. Before activating and fill up the Universe with souls of several nature, Brahma may have meticulously worked out various aspects of the creations, the characteristics of each of the Yugas, several divines who would manifest in each of the Yugas including Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity ,the time- frame for each of the manifestations in places assigned to them across the universe etc.

237. Does any norm exist as to how many Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities and Village deities can manifest in a space? When Brahma sent divines to spaces, he may have ensured that for few hundreds of families, certain no of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deities, Village deities and other guardian deities will be needed and accordingly he may have sent the ganas there to manifest in those forms. However, the Pundits were unable to explain details on them.

238. In the history of Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, a very important and interesting aspect is that the prime deities like Shiva, Vishnu and Parvathi have not been adapted as tutelary deities in their original form, but only their subordinate manifestations have been adapted as tutelary deities.

239. Who were the deities worshipped in the ancient period when divine worship commenced ? The deities, mainly female form of goddesses, associated with the well-being of the villages were either in violent posture or in benevolent ones and worshipped. There was no divisions such as Brahmins and non-Brahmins and everyone in the

village worshipped the same deity in the same shrine or worship places which may have been either a Village deity, guardian deity or some unknown divine in the form of stones or spirits.

240. If we carefully analyse the deities worshipped as Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity, they would find that around 85 % of the deities would be in female form-mostly emanations of Parvathi, hardly 10 % male-emanations of Vishnu or Shiva and 5 % major deities. Lord Vinayaga, Lord Hanuman, Lord Vishnu in their original form, Shiva in original form, Brahma, Saraswathi, Mahalakshmi or even Moon, Sun, Saniswarar and Krishna etc have not been adapted as their Kula Devatha or Tutelary/Family deity in their original form.

241. The present universe is dominated with many religions which have multiple sects in each. Naturally there may be several divine forces being worshipped by each religious sects. When looking at the different kinds of theism or belief in deities, the first big question we have to ask is this: how many deities are there?

242. The Yajurveda mentions that there were 33 Kotis i.e. 330,000,000 divines. (Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_deities). Another version mention the figure as 33 million Gods i.e. 33,000,000 (Ref: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-33-million-demigods-o_b_1737207).

243. It is quite possible that the above two figures may include several demi, semi and sub male and female divines, Deva ganas, Angels, Mohinis and Yoginis who were emanations from prime divines on many occasions. It may not have included the deities of other religions since the

period in which the Yajur veda was written, there were no other religion except hinduism.

244. However, both the figures on divines are contested by some analysts who state that the term 33 koti gods mentioned by the vedas have been misinterpreted as 330 million or 33 crore gods where as the 33 koti means 33 categories.

245. One of the analysts said '33 Crore Gods is a completely misinterpreted fact due to wrong translation of vedic Sanskrit by certain foreign scholars. The term 'trayastrimsati koti' mentioned in Atharvana Veda, Yajur Veda, and Satapatha-brahmana, is rightly translated as 33 Gods. The term koti in Sanskrit has two meaning, one is 'type' and the other is crore. (Ref : http://www.thenewsnow.co.in/newsdet.aspx?q=7208). Therefore, the word Koti might have indicated only the varieties of divines.

246. Another view aired is 'Throughout recorded history, we can count between 8,000 and 12,000 gods who have been worshiped. But we can only count about 9 different types of gods (based on theological characteristics) who were worshiped. Each modern god also corresponds to one of these types, and 5 of them are of the Hindu type'. (Ref: https://lisbdnet.com/how-many-gods-are-there-in-the-world/).

247. However, the Anthropologists estimate that at least 18,000 different gods, goddesses, and various animals or objects have been worshipped by humans since our species first appeared. Today, it is estimated that more than 80 percent of the global population consider themselves religious or spiritual in some form. (ref: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-brain-

food/202107/why-do-humans-keep-inventing-gods-worship) and worship divines of many nature.

248. It is however not known whether the village or guardian deities considered to be divine and worshipped in remote places have also been included or not in any of the recorded list or views aired. Certainly, no of divines worshipped cannot be either 33 crores, or 33 million or even stand at mere 33.

249. Since various versions create confusion, it would be better all of them be ignored and let the factual position be analysed from another angle.

250. As per the census in 2011 there were over 6,40,930 villages spread over the vast land of India alone (Ref: https://testbook.com/question-answer/how-many-villages-are-approximately-there-in-ind--5e1d7f7cf60d5d2d6cf1c8ee).

251. There is not even a single village where some divine is not worshipped. Most of the Village deities differ from one Village to the other. Therefore, even in a fair assessment we can assume that in India alone, 50% of the Villages could have had some form of divines- accounting to three lakhs i.e 3,00,000- who is worshipped by the locals. This is only an assumption.

252. When we read all versions in pre paras it will become clear that there may be multiple divines in many forms and appearances –say not less than a lakh - in this Universe and are worshipped by different people of different countries, different religious groups, ethnics and others.

253. See a case in Africa where many tribal exist and they worship several divines. Yoruba are probably the

best-known West African ethnic culture in the world. In 1989, it was estimated that more than seventy million African and New World peoples practiced one form or another of Yoruba religion. Yoruba religions, inspired by them, are arguably the most widely dispersed West African religions, both in Africa and in the Americas.

254. Yoruba, one of the three major ethnic groups of Nigeria, have the same ethnic and cultural origins even though their geographic dispersal has located them in different modern states. They may also be the most theologically complex West African religions. It is estimated that the Yoruba have a pantheon of as many as six thousand deities which includes Village deities. (Ref: https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/deities-yoruba-and-fon-religions).

255. Look at another case. Zulu traditional religion in Southern Africa contains numerous deities commonly associated with animals or general classes of natural phenomena. They believe that the ancestors are believed to live in the spirit world unKulunkulu (meaning the greatest of the great) and are regarded as intermediaries between the living and the spirit world and they work hand in hand with God. They are similar to the Village deities. The Zulu were originally a major clan in what is today Northern KwaZulu-Natal, founded ca. 1709 by Zulu kaMalandela.

256. The ancient Greeks worshipped many gods, each with a distinct personality and domain. Greek myths explained the origins of the gods and their individual relations with mankind.

257. There are approximately 4,300 religions in the world. This information is according to Adherents, an independent, non-religiously affiliated organization that monitors the number and size of the world's religions. (https://www.theregister.com/2006/10/06/the_odd_body_religion/) Even if one religion have their own divines the count could be not less than 4800, which may include village deities.

258. Therefore no one can give conclusive answer to how many divines are worshipped. All that we hear and read are based mere assumptions since in every country, multiple religions worship multiple divines of their own which includes Village deities. We can at best remain satisfied that there are multiple divines worshipped in the world whose count cannot be authenticated.

-Ended-

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